

*Life & Thought of  
Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai*

BASED ON COMMENTARY OF SHAH-JO-RISALO  
POETIC COMPENDIUM OF SHAH ABDUL LATIF



Researched & Edited by

**Dr. N. A. Baloch**

Translated in English by

**Gul Mohammad Umrani**



Culture Department,  
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APTAN ABRO

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## Publisher's Note

It gives me immense pleasure to be associated with the printing and publication of English translation of the landmark Exegesis Commentary on Shah Jo Risalo volume 8 and 9 by Dr. N.A Baloch. Shah Jo Risalo in ten volumes by Dr. N.A Baloch was completed in 1999 and it has come to acquire a permanent and enduring place of prestige in the world of research and scholarship in Sindh and Pakistan. However, it was felt acutely that such an outstanding work of research should be accessible to wider readership here in Pakistan and abroad. The only way to realize this dream was to get a standard translation of this monumental work from a trusted and serious scholar of English language and literature. This seemingly difficult problem was solved by my old friend and senior colleague Mr. Gul Muhammad Umrani who has proved himself to be an energetic and dedicated man of letters in his new assignment as he was during his long tenure with the Government of Sindh. Mr. Umrani volunteered to undertake the translation of the Exegesis commentary in English, and has wonderfully completed this task within the record period of two months.

I appreciate Mr. Umrani's personal commitment to the project and know his great affection and regard for Dr. N.A Baloch as a person and as the living scholar of history, literature and folk-lore in Pakistan.

I also appreciate the sincere efforts of Mr. Muhammad Ayoub Nizamani former Controller News, Radio Pakistan

Karachi who worked for this project as a Research Assistant with Mr. Umrani. He deserves my sincere commendations for his studious assistance to a hard task master.

I hope this humble endeavour of Culture and Tourism Department will be appreciated by people, who love Shah's poetry and want to understand it.

#### **SHAMS JAFRANI**

Secretary,  
Culture Department  
Government of Sindh

### **Translator's Note**

Let me start with a confession. The idea to rush in where the Angels fear to tread owes its genesis elsewhere. Credit for this goes to my old colleague, friend and well wisher Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Soomro. He is an inveterate Orientalist, thinker and an outstanding researcher besides being a perfect professional civil servant of multifaceted interests. He first proposed, rather prompted me to take up the translation of the exegesis of "Shah-Jo-Risalo" (in volume 8-9) by Dr. N.A. Baloch- our great living legend. The magnum opus "Shah-Jo-Risalo" (in ten volumes) is a monumental seminal work of incomparable dimension in Sindh and Pakistan. It is a milestone research project conceived, executed and completed by Dr. Baloch in 1999. The profundity of scholarship and painstaking endeavors behind the project indubitably speak for themselves when one goes through the work. The proposal of Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Soomro was a sort of stimulating opportunity for me to rediscover myself. However, initially, I felt a little handicapped being all alone and rather overwhelmed by the assignment. The Anglo-Saxon (English) language applied on Sindhi language used in standard research by Dr. N.A. Baloch and rendered into subtle nuances of esoteric Sufistic terminology in English prose was quite an experience, sometimes revealing, sometimes daunting.

My old friend and colleague Mr. Shams Jafrani, Secretary Culture and Tourism Government of Sindh, came



to my rescue and sponsored the assignment after concurrence from Dr. N.A. Baloch. He also solved my problem of loneliness by lending me the services of Mr. Muhammad Ayoob Nizamani, who proved his worth by taking my monotonous dictations and frequent admonitions patiently. Without his willing consent and responsive attitude the assignment would not have been finished within the deadline of two months set by Mr. Jafrani. Mr. Ayoob's patience was indeed that of Job (Biblical Prophet).

Before I conclude, I would like to express my genuine debt of gratitude to Dr. N.A. Baloch for his kind and benign indulgence and a very compassionate attention to me in all my affairs-academic and personal. He has always been an immense source of inspiration for me and been a never failing mentor, guide and philosopher. I once again thank Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Soomro, my intellectual prompter and inspirer who encouraged me and Mr. Shams Jafrani who finally sponsored the publication and printing of this important book under the enlightened and energetic leadership of Honorable Madam Sasui Palijo Minister Culture and Tourism Department, Government of Sindh.

My sincere thanks are also due for Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari, Secretary Antiquities Department for letting me use my precious office time on this important project of cultural heritage and research at Dr. N.A. Baloch Institute of Heritage Research, Hyderabad during the months of November 2009 to January 2010.

**Gul Muhammad Umrani**

Director Dr. N.A. Baloch  
Institute of Heritage Research  
Hyderabad.

January 2010.

## Introduction

The story of culmination of a century long research on Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai is in your hands.

The great poet of Sindhi language Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai was born in 1102 AH/1690 AD and died in 1165 AH/1752 AD. He was amongst the few poets of the world who neither composed poetry with pen on a sheet of paper nor dictated it to others. As in the case of Maulana Rumi whose Masnavi comprises twenty six thousand verses, a tradition runs that he would enunciate verses and his devoted companions used to write it down. Shah Latif's entire poetry is the outcome of a peculiar ecstatic state of higher consciousness. It was received with rapt attention and memorized through persistent repetitions by the Fakirs-in-attendance. It was therefore an obviously probable phenomenon as the Raag had developed into a permanent institution and ritual during Shah's life time. It is also due to this reason that two myths gained currency about Shah Abdul Latif: the first related to the fable of sinking his Kalam in Karar Lake and the second pertained to a commonly held belief of being an illiterate poet or Ummi (امی). A compendium of his poetry written or dictated during his life time has not been found and the first complete compendium called "Ganj" was written in 1207 AH i.e. forty two years after Shah Latif's demise. As it appears from the word "Ganj" it is a compendium which contains besides Shah's compositions, all other verses of Persian, Hindi and Seraiki or



Punjabi poets sung in his presence. The most characteristic point of "Ganj" is that since Shah Latif held Rumi's Masnavi in high esteem, the beginning of "Ganj" has been made with Bait commensurate with the first verse of Masnavi. Masnavi's first verse is as under:

بشنو از ني چون حكايت مي كند  
و از جدائيا شكايات مي كند

The first Bait of "Ganj" is as follows:

وڊيل ٿي وايون ڪري، ڪنل ڪو ڪاري  
هن پڻ پنهنجا ساريا، هوءِ هنجون هوتن لاءِ هاري

Similarly other Persian poets whose verses are included in the "Ganj" are Sanai and Hafiz. Besides the poetic compositions of the classical Sindhi poets like Qazi Qadan, Shah Karim, Shah Lutfullah and Shah Inayat Rizvi are also mixed up therein. Shah's Risalo in its complete form was printed and published in 1283 AH/1867 AD from Bombay on lithograph and since then it has been in regular print. However, prior to this, that is during the three fourth of the century from 1207 AH to 1283 AH and after that till the recent times Shah's Risalo owing to its widespread popularity was written and dictated in manuscript form. However, it is very pertinent point to note that there is an intense divergence amidst the manuscript and printed editions of the Risalo. For example, the compendiums (Risalos) of the incipient or earlier period which can be traced up to 1207 AH commence with "Sur Sasui", but after 1250 AH all the manuscript Risalos begin with "Sur Kalyan". The second important point worth noting is that in the earlier Risalos excluding "Ganj", the number of verses is conspicuously less and in the latter-day Risalos the number is redoubled. For instance the number of verses in incipient manuscript Risalos is hardly two thousand and the number of "wais" is less than hundred. This number increases to more than four thousand verses and

three hundred "wais" in the latter-day Risalos. Similarly in certain manuscript texts the number of Surs is thirty whereas in some other it exceeds thirty six.

Likewise the condition of printed Risalos was no better. The Risalos printed from Bombay carried variations in number of verses. The Risalo compiled by Mirza Kalich Beg had 4163 verses and 240 "wais". In an edition of Risalo from Matba Safdari Bombay this number is 4187 and 237 respectively. This was the maximum number of verses and 'wais' amongst all the printed editions of Risalo.

In this background the modern research on Shah Jo Risalo was initiated in the third decade of the twentieth century by Dr. Gurbuxani. Dr. Umar Bin Muhammad Daudpoto worked wholeheartedly as his associate which has been candidly acknowledged by Dr. Gurbuxani in his preface. As Dr. Gurbuxani had studied abroad and got the doctorate, he was fully aware of the latest research methodologies. For the first time he realized that all extraneous compositions of other poets which had entered in Shah Jo Risalo need to be separated and expurgated and only the genuine compositions of Shah should be published. As a result of this research, the first volume was published in 1923 AD, the second in 1924 AD and the third in 1931 AD. In the preparation of first volume four texts (two manuscript and two printed), for the second volume one more manuscript text and for the third volume still one more manuscript text was consulted. However, only eighteen Surs were completed within the three volumes. The most important achievement was that a commentary of these Surs was written for the first time. Dr. Gurbuxani was the first scholar who gave an explicatory exegesis of the verses with etymological and semantic derivations of the words. Besides his was the first exegesis which interpreted and explained a maximum number of verses with reference to the Masnavi of Maulana



Rum. It was a matter of immense regret such a great work could not be completed, most probably due to the reason that Gubuxani was scathingly criticized in the literary circles of the time by both the Hindu and Muslim scholars.

It was due to the incomplete research on Shah Jo Risalo that Dr. Daudpoto was assigned anew, the research work by Sindhi Adabi Board in 1951 AD. Dr. Daudpoto writes in one of his articles that he started the work in 1952 AD by comparing "Ganj Sharif" at Bhit Shah and commenced inscribing various readings thereof from Mirza Kalich Beg's edition. In an article in the monthly magazine *Nai Zindagi* in 1958 AD Dr. Daudpoto informs that he had compared and contrasted about thirty manuscript texts of Shah Jo Risalo during the last nine years. However, owing to the sudden demise of Dr. Daudpoto in November 1958 the work remained unfinished.

After the demise of Dr. Daudpoto, the realization intensified to complete the ongoing research on Shah Jo Risalo. Ultimately in the year 1966 AD realizing the importance of this task, Bhit Shah Cultural Centre Committee on the initiative and proposal from Dr. Baloch handed over the assignment to him. According to Dr. Baloch's writing, this assignment was to be completed in two phases. The first phase envisaged finding original sources of Shah Jo Risalo and biography and publishing them according to a standard research method. In the second phase the comprehensive, authentic and standardized text was to be completed. During the course of research in the first phase three forms of text of Shah Jo Risalo were known which were published as a reference work for the benefit of the would be researchers.

- (a) In the year 1969 AD the earlier text of Shah Jo Risalo preserved in the British Museum was published. This text was consulted by Dr. Gurbuxani in his

incomplete research and it belongs to the period pertaining to the end of twelfth century AH i.e. before the "Ganj".

- (b) In year 1974 AD according to traditions of Raagnama i.e. the three manuscript texts written during 1269-70 AH and commencing with "Sur Kalyan" were compared and published as a model text, with various marginal readings.
- (c) In the year 1977 AD another model text was published commencing with "Sur Sasui" after comparing ten manuscript texts concerning the earlier period (1165-1207).

The work on the second phase started in 1980 AD. But according to Dr. Baloch's statement the speed of work was rather slow owing to various reasons. Finally in year 1989 AD "Shah Jo Risalo" alias "Shah Jo Kalam's" volume one was published. This contained a standard text, comparison and explanation of "Sur Kalyan" and "Sur Yaman Kalyan" along with the biography of Shah Latif in the light of modern research. Exhaustive corroborative evidence was presented for each new interpretation. In addition to this explanation or commentary of these two Surs was also given for each verse in juxtaposition. The second volume of Shah Jo Kalam containing four Surs was published in 1992 after an interval of three years. The third volume of "Shah Jo Kalam" containing seven Surs was published in 1994 AD. All the volumes were published by Bhit Shah Cultural Centre Committee under aegis of Sindh Culture Department.

In 1994 when I was appointed as Commissioner of Hyderabad Division, it became my responsibility as Chairman Bhit Shah Cultural Centre to accord great priority to this task which was even otherwise incumbent on me because of my immense devotion to the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif. I was worried about this fact that it took more than ten



years to conduct research and publish three volumes of Shah Jo Risalo. I wondered how much more time it would take to complete the remaining seven volumes! It was decided finally after consultation with Dr. Sahib that if all the requisite resources were made available then the pace of work could be accelerated. I used my administrative capabilities and arranged to provide all the requisite resources to Dr. Baloch and subsequently the remaining six volumes were published under the aegis of "Allama I.I. Kazi Risalo Research Project". Thus ultimately "Shah Abdul Latif Jo Kalam" and "Risalo Jo Kalam" were published in proper form in the year 1999. To quote Dr. Baloch: "After thirty two years of research and study and comparison of fifty manuscript texts and sixteen printed editions", Shah's own versified compositions with diacritical marks in proper form and standard, systematized format with meaning were published. The last tenth volume of the Risalo contained that composition which as a result of research could not prove to be Shah's own Kalam (verses) and it was published under the heading of "Risalo Jo Kalam". This was justified with a comprehensive exegesis, substantiated by standard academic and literary criteria. Explanation and commentary were offered for the verses proving thereby that these were not the original compositions and these 'wais' were not genuine Shah vintage. According to detailed account gathered from research about two thousand one hundred eighty verses and one hundred forty 'wais' could not be established to be that of Shah Latif and obviously these constituted an essential part of Shah's compositions in various Risalos. To conclude as a result of research, the genuine Kalam of Shah comprises three thousand three hundred twenty verses and 'wais' approximately.

A full single volume was devoted for the lexicon of Shah-Jo-Risalo which included quaint words, idioms, phrases and

sentences and these were more than twenty thousand. The credit for publishing this lexicon went to Sindhi Language Authority which published this volume under the nomenclature of "Roshni" in year 2002 and thus research on the ten volumes was finished in all respects.

A person conversant with the basic principles of research may very well question as to what are the criteria and standard of evaluation and how these could have been applied and used to determine that these are Shah's original and genuine compositions? Dr. Sahib has laid down this criteria as enumerated below :

- (1) The criteria of the number of the Risalos.
- (2) The criteria of the antiquity of the Risalos.
- (3) The criteria of comparison of Risalos.
- (4) The criteria of language.
- (5) The criteria of poetry.
- (6) The criteria of higher vision and thought.

It is obvious that a verse found in all the Risalos would necessarily be deemed to be from Shah's composition. Thus in the field of research, the antiquity of sources has maximum importance i.e. it should be closer to the poets or writers times. A comparative study and scrutiny yield correct textual reading. The test of the three standards are, of course, of subjective nature the importance thereof could not be denied as these are duly acknowledged in the academic world. How these criteria have been used and in what way? It does not require any explanation; however, Dr. Sahib has elucidated this aspect in detail. Nevertheless it is now settled that the future researcher and critic would ensure that these criteria are evaluated critically and how far the basic principles and precepts are complied with and what is their utility.



The research about Shah Jo Risalo covers a period of more than a century. The objective of recounting the background of this research was to reiterate the fact the modern research initiated by Dr. Gurbuxani at the beginning of twentieth century has come to culmination at the end of the century after passing through various phases. Owing to thirty two years hard work with the publication of ten volumes of Shah Jo Risalo by Dr. N.A Baloch the desired objectives have been achieved successfully. Though it is commonly believed that no research work is deemed to be the final verdict on the subject, it is a fact that certain research works have proved to be the ultimate authority. For instance Masnavi of Maulana Rumi's critical text prepared by R.A Nicholson is universally acknowledged to be the best. This text was prepared by the famous orientalist from 1925 to 1940 after fifteen years of persistent endeavor of studious research and this work is now accepted as the final authority on Rumi. Maulana Rumi died in 672 AH? / 1274 AD and thus this critical text was prepared after more than six centuries. Nicholson not only edited the six Daftars (volumes) but translated the same in English and gave explanatory notes and references in two volumes. In today's academic world, including Iran, Nicholson's corrected edition is considered to be a classic work and its reference is deemed to be creditable and authentic. Let me explain in the end that this text of Shah Jo Risalo is comprehensive because during the course of research a great number of Risalos, totaling sixty five came under scrutiny and critical evaluation. These include forty nine manuscripts and sixteen printed editions of Risalo. According to the principles of modern research the manuscript material has been treated as primary source and the printed material has been used as secondary source. Besides all the variant and different readings found in all the Risalos, have been provided. From this perspective a person

possessing all the ten volumes of the Risalo has as if, access to all the previous editions (manuscript and printed) written and published during the last two centuries. One can form an independent opinion after a comparative study and evaluation of all the Risalos. The research is authentic because the textual reading adopted and discarded, has been supported by evidentiary authority. It is standardized research because every word has been critically examined according to the prescribed criteria and in case of accepting textual reading, the reason and explanation thereof have been provided to justify the inclusion of the verse or why based on a particular criterion this verse qualifies to be the verse of Shah.

#### **Some Important conclusions of research:**

- (1) It was generally believed before the research that Shah Jo Risalo commenced with Sur Kalyan. However, as a result of research it has been discovered that all the earlier Risalos written after the demise of Shah and with the beginning of thirteenth century, commenced with Sur Sasui. The "Gunj" written in 1207 AH was not the earliest but the last of the Risalos in the series.
- (2) An authentic biography of Shah Abdul Latif was prepared for the first time after research on scientific lines. This is absolutely immune from mythological style and the correct place of birth of Shah Latif has been determined for the first time. Prior to this all biographers were nursing illusions and misconceptions about the parentage of mother of Shah. They all regarded Makhdum Arabi or Shah Dayani of old Hala as a maternal grandfather of Shah Latif, though this patriarch had live a century before Shah Latif's birth.



(3) The research about Raag of Shah Latif was for the first time completed indicating authoritatively that the institution of Shah Jo Raag was established in 1144 AH at Bhit Shah and is still continuing. Efforts were made to understand Shah Jo Raag in a scientific manner and it was determined that this Raag was not a component of Indian music but Shah Latif had himself originated this institution. This Raag is a sort of Sindhi folk music wherein the music of words holds a seminal position instead of vocal sound.

(4) Meetings were held in various parts of Sindh including Thar, Kachho, Kohistan and coastal area where learned discourses with Sughars (folk poets), specialist and expert Fakirs of Shah's verses yielded correct meanings and semantic interpretations of quaint words and idiomatic phrases used in Shah's poetry. All this material was not available in the lexicons and this valuable information was collected in a period of about half century. This new style of research was hitherto unknown in the academic world of Sindh.

(5) Through this method of research the history of Shah Jo Risalo has been delineated focusing on the facts: When did the writing of Risalo start, how and when? All the answers were provided as to which Risalo was genuine or otherwise from amongst Risalos compiled at different places and time. It is an authentic history of Risalos covering the last two hundred years i.e. since the demise of Shah up to the present period and this has opened a new chapter in proper comprehension of Shah Jo Risalo.

(6) For the first time a correct reading was established of various words and locations used in Shah Jo Risalo. These words were surprisingly, mistakenly and

fallaciously current in the verses. A few examples will be in order. This is a verse from Sur Kalyan:

او ٿايل، اکين ۾ تو کي باري بان  
ايو اڳريون ڪرين، ماڳ هٿيو مستان  
جانب تون زبان، اکين سين ايڏا ڪرين .

Consequently in four verses the same word "او ٿايل" (O'Qabeel) has occurred and its meaning has been adduced by Dr. Gurbuxani as the son of Hazrat Adam, ٿايل (Qabeel/Cain). He had murdered his brother Habel (Habeel/Abel). That means here Shah Latif calls his beloved Qabeel or killer. The same reading and same meaning occurs in the Risalo of Ghulam Muhammad Shahwani, Kalyan Advani and Usman Ali Ansari who had followed Gurbuxani. Actually this word is عايل (Aqabeel) which means one having the eyes of falcon and was used in this sense by the poet and it has also appeared as such in Bombay edition. Look at the world of difference between the two meanings: whither eyes and whither Qabeel!

The second example is the following verse from Sur Samundi:

بندر ديسان ديس، مله نه ملي وار يئين  
فقيرائي ويس، امله ڏين اتورا.

Dr. Gurbuxani, Advani and Ansari have interpreted "نه ملي وار يئين" as "not received with sand" or it is not received with sand particles or dross. Whereas the original word read by Dr. Baloch is Mali Bar or Mala Bar. The poet means that there are ports in every country but there is no port like Mala Bar. Such ports were famous for profit earning in those times and Sur Suri Raag and Sur Samundi mention



the ports of Porbunder, Aden and Lanka where the traders of Sindh used to go for merchandise.

- (7) It is an accepted fact that Shah Latif had great literary spiritual relevance and relation with Masnavi of Maulana Rumi and his thought. Maulana Rumi is the only poet of the world whose name has been cited by Shah Latif and he has applauded Rumi's ideas about beauty and love, as follows:

طالب قصر سونهن سن اي رومي جي رهائڻ  
پهرين وڃائڻ پاڻ. پسڻ پوءِ ٻرين ڪي.

Dr. Gurbuxani as well as others after him, Shahwani, Advani and Ansari have used the following famous verse of Sur Yaman Kalyan considering it to be the original of Shah Latif:

عاشق عزرائيل، پيا مڙهي سڌڙيا .  
منجهان سڪ سبيل، لعنتي لعل ٿيو.

Dr. Baloch does not consider this verse to the composition of Shah, therefore, he has not included it in Shah's compositions but in the other compositions of Risalo. He has justified this on the ground that this verse is not included in many Risalos of the earlier period. The second explanation offered by him is that Azazel had shown haughtiness and this hubris led him to eternal condemnation. It is opinion of Dr. Baloch that this verse was composed by some Salik Fakir after the demise of Shah Latif and it entered in the Risalo. Let us evaluate the verse in the light of Rumi's thought in Masnavi, as Satan has been discussed many a time in Masnavi. In the fourth Daftar Rumi says:

داند او ڪو نيڪبخت و محرم است  
زيرڪي ز ابليس و عشق از آدم است .

This means "one who is blessed and confidante knows that craftiness or slyness is the work of Satan or Azazel but adoration or love is the work of human being". According to Rumi's thought love is the characteristic of a human being and not that of Iblees who had argued with his Maker that he was superior to mankind. Iblees maintained that he was the creation of fire and mankind was the creation of dust. It was due to this sophistry that he was condemned and expelled from Heaven. In fact all the sufis have declared humankind as the centre of love. Viewing from this perspective, how Shah Latif could have composed such a verse which was against generally accepted teachings of the sufis. This is reinforced by the fact that Shah's poetic compositions are immune from blasphemy. The conclusion drawn by Dr. Baloch on the basis of external evidence is indeed duly corroborated by the internal evidence or the intellectual content of Shah's poetry.

There is an authentic verse of Shah Latif in Sur Yaman Kalyan where Azazel has been invoked and this verse is found in all Risalos in the following form:

اڪر پڙهي اڳيا، ٽاضي ٿئين ڪٽاءِ،  
جئن پيرئين ۽ پاڻين، ايڏنهن ايئن نه آءِ،  
ان سرڪي سندن ساءِ، پڇج عزرائيل ڪي.

In this verse Shah Latif terms human being wretched who with little knowledge considers himself to be all-knowing and confers upon himself the mantle of a judge. The poet exhorts that one should avoid the habit of considering oneself always right and should not take pride in this. In the last line he explains that Azazel was punished severely for thinking ever himself right. That is why he earned the



appellation of Iblees and Satan and the human being has to learn the eternal lesson from this fall of Satan. It is obvious that the action of Azazel has been condemned in this verse and the others have been advised to avoid this blunder. In ordinary Risalos this verse has been placed with "Ashiq Azazel" (vide the Risalos of Gurbuxani, Shahwani, Advani and Ansari). How is it possible that a poet of high consciousness like Latif should condemn Satan in one verse and then declare Azazel as a lover in another verse?

(8) As result of Dr. Baloch's research certain glaring mistakes have been found in the printed editions of the Risalos which were never identified by any researcher. For instance the below mentioned eight wais which gained wide spread popularity under the name of Shah were printed for the first time in the Risalo of Dr. Trump:

- ۱- منڌ پيشندي مون ساجن صحيح سجاتو (سر ڪلياڻ)
- ۲- ٿيندو تن طبيب، ڏارون منهنجي درد جو (سر ڪلياڻ)
- ۳- دوست بيهي ڏراي ٿيو ملڻ جو سعيو (سر يمن ڪلياڻ)
- ۴- يار سچڻ جي فراق ٿي جيئڻيون آءُ ماري (سر يمن ڪلياڻ)
- ۵- چوري چڏم چيرين، ٻاروچل ٻانهي (سر ديسي)
- ۶- آءُ راڻا ره رات، تنهنجي چانگي کي چندن چاريان (مومل راڻو)
- ۷- ڪيئن ڪريان ڪاڏي وڃان، مون کي سوڍو سجه نه ٿي (مومل راڻو)
- ۸- جيڪس جهليا مڇ، گهاٽو گهر نه آيا (سر گهاٽو)

These eight wais were first incorporated by Dr. Gurbuxzni borrowing them from the Risalo of Trump and subsequently these wais were included in the Risalos of Shahwani, Advani and Ansari. However, it is a fact that these wais were never a part of any manuscript Risalo and even are not included in the Risalos printed and published from Bombay.

According to the research of Dr. Baloch these were composed by the Munshi (scribe) who prepared the text of Shah Jo Risalo for Dr. Trump. That Munshi when discovered that all other Surs were followed by wais but in certain Surs these were not to be found, he decided to fill the vacuum by composing these 'wais' himself. In this manner he appended at the end of about sixty two 'wais' the refrain "ادبون عبداللطيف چئي". This refrain was never found in earlier manuscript Risalos. The upshot of this lengthy discourse is to explicate and elaborate the research of Shah Jo Risalo which is indeed a landmark academic achievement in Sindhi language and literature. Such academic magnum opus is of course very rare in the world of academia and such master pieces could not be produced without the blessing of Nature. It is a good fortune for the Sindhi literature that in the person of Dr. Baloch, Sindh has been blessed with such an indefatigable researcher who has presented such a unique asset after years of labor of love of advanced research and academic excellence.

As discussed earlier "Shah Jo Risalo" "Shah Jo Kalam" and "Shah Jo Risalo" "Risalo Jo Kalam" were published separately in 1998-1999 but it was felt that both should be published in the form of a book for the benefit of lay reader and a researcher at the same time. They would indeed take inspiration from the poetry of Shah imbued with higher vision and wisdom. This would enable the readers to also peruse the compositions of other poets which were heard by Shah himself and he let others listen and approved himself or these were included by certain Fakirs under his name. This other Kalam (compositions) would also help to understand the thought of Shah Latif and now this has been collected in a single volume. This would also help to dispel the



misunderstanding that Dr. Baloch has willfully expurgated certain genuine and rightful verses of Shah Latif from the Risalo.

According to my personal opinion this book would also need two important additions. First all those sixty eight texts i.e. fifty manuscripts and sixteen printed editions of the Risalo which constitute the core of research, the variant placed after the verses should have been included at the end of this volume according to the principles of modern research. Thus in this form one volume Risalo would be equivalent to sixty two Risalos and readers and researchers would have access to textual and matter of all manuscript and published editions Risalos of the last two centuries. The second imperative is to prepare a comprehensive index which would help the readers find with ease any verse of his choice.

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12th December 2008 / 13th Zil Haj 1429 AH.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

## PROLOGUE

In this volume the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai is original, i.e. intrinsically his own compositions unadulterated, not mixed up with the compositions of other poets, bards or poetasters. The poetic compendium (Risalo) of Shah has been evaluated according to the acknowledged principles and standards of academic research and literary criticism: the extraneous composition has been winnowed from the original.

During the life of Shah Latif and thereafter his companions called Fakirs transcribed poetry which included Shah's compositions along with that of other mystics and poets. That is why all the extant manuscript and printed anthologies of Shah's poetry (The Risalo) invariably include the compositions of other mystics, Sufi saints and folk bards with the original Abyat and Wais (couplets and lyrics) of Shah Latif.

Under the present project, it was deemed necessary that in order to standardize and establish a comprehensive and authoritative text of the Risalo, a proper study of the texts of the different manuscripts and printed editions of the Risalo should be carried out and chaff should be winnowed out of the grain. To achieve this aim serious study and research continued on for about thirty two years (1966-1999) and all the printed editions of the Risalo were collected. Also efforts were made to acquire manuscripts of the Risalo from Sindh



and abroad. Consequently fifty manuscripts and sixteen printed editions were compared and collated according to the acknowledged and standard principles of research and literary criticism. Thus, extraneous verses were separated from Shah's original compositions.

During the last 150 years and since the 2nd half of the Nineteenth Century A.D the scholars who studied Shah Jo Risalo and found extraneous compositions in the text thought of removing the dross and compile the Risalo based on the original and authentic verses of Shah. These scholars suffered from an inherent fallacy as they had mistakenly considered the extraneous compositions as base and of inferior value, though many compositions were indubitably a precious asset of classical Sindhi literature. By 1920 when Dr. Hotchand Mulchand Gurbuxani edited the Risalo anew, he deprecated the Wais and Kafis (lyrical compositions) in the text as inferior; according to him "these Wais and Kafis such as are being sung since yore by the jesters and dancers". He therefore, expurgated many Abyat and Wais from his edition of the Risalo, by which he incurred justifiable criticism as he had offered no reasonable explanation for such massive expurgation.

Under the present research scheme, from the very inception this basic principle has been kept in view that not only genuine compositions of Shah are to be collated standardized and presented but even others which have entered the Risalo since the time of Shah are a rich heritage and asset of Sindhi language and literature. Therefore compositions are not to be expurgated from the Risalo's text but are to be published and preserved in their proper form with meticulous care. In view of this consideration, under the present project all the versifications originally composed by Shah along with other versifications of the Risalo have been published with complete research. This scheme started

from 1966 and aimed at to prepare and present a comprehensive and authoritative text. With the publication of this 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> volume the project comes to an end.

Out of the ten volumes of the project the following eight volumes have already been published.

#### **VOLUME I - SHAH JO RISALO:**

Shah Jo Kalam (858 pages).

This contains Shah's biography along with research prolegomena on the history and textual sequence of Shah Jo Risalo-an authentic text of "Sur Kalian and Sur Yeman" with comprehensive explanation and prologue is also included. This was published in 1989

#### **VOLUME-2 SHAH JO RISALO:**

Shah Jo Kalam (517 pages).

This contains Sur Khambha, Sur Brawo, Sur Sri Raag and Sur Samooni along with authoritative text, comprehensive explanation and prologue. This was published in 1992.

#### **VOLUME-3 SHAH JO RISALO:**

Shah Jo Kalam (610 pages) -

This contains Sur Ghatu, Sur Khahori, Sur Kapaiti, Sur Bilawal, Sur Pirbhati, Sur Karayal and Sur Dahar along with authoritative text, comprehensive explanation and prologue. This volume was published in 1984.

#### **VOLUME-4 SHAH JO RISALO:**

Shah Jo Kalam (800 pages)

This volume contains five Surs Sasui, Sur Aabri, Mazoor, Desi, Kohiari and Hussaini along with authoritative text, comprehensive explanation and prologue. This volume was published in 1977.



#### **VOLUME-5      SHAH JO RISALO**

Shah Jo Kalam (402 pages)

This volume contains Sur Rano, Sur Leela, Sur Kamode and Sur Surath along with authoritative text, comprehensive explanation and prologue. This volume was published in 1997.

#### **VOLUME-6      SHAH JO RISALO:**

Shah Jo Kalam (625 pages)

This contains Sur Ripp, Sur Poorab, Sur Ram Kali and Sur Aasa along with authoritative text, comprehensive explanation and prologue. This volume was published in 1995.

#### **VOLUME-7      SHAH JO RISALO:**

Shah Jo Kalam (700 pages)

This contains Sur Marui, Sur Suhni, and Sur Sarang along with authoritative texts, comprehensive explanations and prologue. This volume was published in 1998.

#### **VOLUME-10      SHAH JO RISALO:**

Shah Jo Kalam (960 pages)

This volume contains Sur Kalyan to Sur Basant. This includes the compositions of all other mystics, Sufis and poets excluding Shah. This was published in 1996.

Regarding volumes 8 and 9 it was planned that volume 8 would include biography of Shah, history and textual sequence of Risalo, meaning of Abyat and Wais and other explanatory subjects and in volume 9 the original text of Shah would be presented. However, after the completion and publication of seven volumes it appeared that the proposed material of volume 8 (History and editing of Risalo, textual sequence of Surs and explanation of Ragaas etc) had already been presented comprehensively in the prologues of the first

seven volumes and therefore their study would be more rewarding in the respective volumes. However it was deemed appropriate that the proposed material in the eighth volume pertaining to biography of Shah, Shah's wisdom and thought and the meaning of Abyat and wais may be collated with volume 9 along with the original poetic composition of Shah to enable the readers to comprehend the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif. Keeping this perspective in view volumes 8 and 9 have been printed together as a single volume.

As a result of this research project the entire Shah Jo Risalo has been integrated into two volumes (8 and 9) containing the original poetry of Shah whereas volume ten (10) includes the other versified compositions of the Risalo in textual exact sequence in the proper form. This poetry is an invaluable asset and treasure of Sindhi language and literature. These verses are the compositions of mystics and folk bards, from out of which seventy names of authors have been identified after research. (vide volume ten prologue, p-53-58)

The project to bring out a comprehensive and authoritative text of Shah Jo Risalo has fructified after sustained and persistent endeavor and vision spanning over thirty two years. The nine bulky volumes published under the project are a veritable encyclopedia of Shah Jo Risalo. The research project about the Risalo is an important scheme in the history of language and literature in the twentieth century. With the completion of the project following objectives have been achieved:

- 1- Shah's original composition (Abyat and Wais) have been separated from the compositions of other mystics and folk bards on the basis of contrast and comparison as enunciated by the principles of classical literary criticism. Prior to this all the manuscript and printed scripts of Shah Jo Risalo contained shah's compositions adulterated with the compositions of other mystic poets and folk bards.



Thus Shah's original compositions were not to be found in its pristine purity and consequently deflecting the presentation of Shah Jo Risalo as a master piece of classical literature at international level. The standard text in this volume comprises the original compositions of Shah Sahib and includes 3375 Abyat and Wais. For the first time such a voluminous stock of Shah's compositions has been printed through this research.

- 2- Shah's compositions (Abyat and Wais) have been arranged and presented in standard form from the perspective of language, poetry, metre, description, narration, meaning and thought. Diacritical marks, with proper enunciation and orthographic accuracy have been presented in this volume.
- 3- The versification of other mystic poets and folk bards found in the manuscript and printed editions of the Risalo have been considered to be valuable after comparative analysis and presented separately and in proper form in volume ten. The conventional view prevailing hitherto has been rejected that it was an extraneous material (Kalam) and therefore it should be expurgated.
- 4- In the Risalo the Surs followed by Dastan (stories) and followed by Abyat and Wais have been arranged according to subject and purport, description, narration and meaning in the light of evolution of Shah's mystical vision.
- 5- All the Ragaas of Surs have been explicated fully. These Surs are sung by Fakirs. According to the phraseology and terminology of the Risalo Sur means Raag. Risalo's subjects have been named after the Surs i.e. they are named after Ragaas.
- 6- The research on Sur Kedarō has been brought to culmination. Additional compositions pertaining to Sur Kedarō hitherto unknown have been discovered. It has

also been confirmed as to who had composed these Abyat. Before this the verses printed in the Bombay edition were deemed to be Sur Kedarō and no research had been conducted regarding Abyat and Wais pertaining to Sur Kedarō in the manuscript forms of the Risalo. According to present research, fourteen more Abyat and three more Wais have been discovered. That means material amounting to one whole Dastan has been made available which has been included as chapter seven in volume ten (P-194-195).

The quaint and archaic words and terms have been defined and special research has been conducted highlighting how these words are pronounced and construed in various parts of Sindh specially the area adjoining Bhit Shah. Therefore in order to understand meaning of words and terms used in the compositions of Shah, the living Sindhi has been made as standard reference instead of etymological semantics of lexicography.

In the prologue of each Sur various perspectives of Shah's wisdom, philosophy and universal thought have been highlighted, the background of each Sur elucidated and character, events and habitations have been explained. Pertaining to history and editing of Risalo for the first time through this research, it has been elaborated in volume one that how and when the Risalo was compiled and out of the various editions of Risalo written by Fakirs which editions were original and which were fake. It has been discovered that in the earliest period the writing of Risalo started with the Sur of Sasui and it was only in 1250 A.H that for the convenience of Raag (Singing) the Risalo was rearranged in the form of Raagnama and it ceremonially commenced with Sur Kalyan.



10- For the first time the biography of Shah has been presented by removing the cloak of conventional lore and it has been presented in the light of its original sources, historical references and correct traditions. It was a long standing need which has been addressed with immense labour to a great extent.

11- The most paramount objective was to delineate multidimensional perspectives of a universal, humanistic, Sufistic and spiritual thought as manifested in various Surs. On the basis of this basic analysis the super structure of Shah's universal philosophy has been raised.

This volume itself encompasses the original compositions of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai and is therefore an authentic Risalo in its own right but it is imperative to state here that all the Abyat and Wais with their proper and correct text under their respective Surs and Dastans with different readings in diverse editions of the Risalo have been extensively and intensively elucidated and explicated in the seven preceding volumes. Therefore it is incumbent on every learned scholar and researcher to be abreast of the research conducted in the first seven volumes. Since this volume is being printed in the end of the project, the text and the meaning of first seven volumes have been reviewed and appropriate corrections have been incorporated. With these corrections, this volume from the point of view of revision and research is comparatively of a higher standard.

The writer is indeed grateful to Mr. Jemeel Ahmed Siddiqui Secretary Local Bodies Government of Sindh who has kindly sanctioned financial assistance for the research on Shah Jo Risalo. On the basis of this financial assistance this volume has been printed in a standard edition and the price has also been reduced for the benefit of the common readers. I am also indebted to Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Soomro, honorary member of Allama I. I. Kazi Memorial Society who has been

generous in his assistance from time to time and without whose support and assistance this project could not have completed successfully.

During the process of completion of this volume, Muhammad Ismail Shaikh left the office in February 1999 after years of long association and joined Sindhi Language Authority. Two other workers Ayaz Mirza and Mukhtiar Ahmed Baloch remained my assistants till the completion of this volume. Husain Ahmed Memon supervised the computer composition and "Sughar" Abdul Rahman Mahesar was in charge of printing process and is responsible for bringing out such a decent and robust edition.

In the end I express my gratitude to all my well wishers.

Hyderabad Sindh.  
10<sup>th</sup> June 1999 A.D

**Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Biography of Shah Abdul Latif

#### Genealogy\*, birth, childhood and early education period.

Shah Abdul Latif belongs to Muthalvi Syed also known as Mutalvi or Karim Pota family of Syeds of Matiari which is a branch of a larger clan of Jarar or Jarar pota according to a larger genealogical tree. The patriarch of this clan of Syed Jarar (Jalal) was a son of Syed Sharfuddin. From this perspective Jararpotas are also Sharf Potas. Sharfuddin's grandfather Syed Haider was son of Syed Mir Ali of Herat town who was descended from Imam Musa Kazim. From this perspective the Syeds of Matiari because of their great grandfather Mir Ali (Syed Ali) are Herati Syeds. They are Kazmi Syeds owing to the aforementioned genealogy. According to genealogy of Matiari Syeds, Syed Haider came to Sindh at Hala Kundi (ancient name of Hala town). He married with a daughter of Rais Shah Muhammad Bin Darya Khan of Halo tribe and had a son named Ali. His son Syed

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\* The entire detail pertaining to genealogy has been transcribed from traditional genealogy of Syeds of Matiari which was originally in Persian and a few copies of it are available in Sindh. There are some deficiencies of tradition in this genealogy pertaining to events till the advent of Syed Haider in Sindh: (a) Some generations are missing in the genealogical account of Syed Haider to Imam Musa Kazim and (b) Syed Haider had probably arrived in Sindh before the attack of Ameer Taimur on India.



(Mir) Ali remained in Sindh and Karim Pota and all other Syeds of Matiari are descendants of Syed Ali Sindhi.

**(a) Arrival of Sadaats in Matiari according to the genealogical traditions is delineated in this manner:**

Syed (Mir) Ali (Sindhi) might have been born in 802-803 AH at Hala Kundi but probably his father Syed Haider had arrived in Sindh earlier (end of eighteenth century Hijra) and the beginning of Sama dynasty and Mir Ali Sindhi was born at the end of eighth century. He was brought up by his maternal parents at Hala Kundi who also got him married. His second marriage was into a Turkish tribe. He had three sons: Ahmed, Sharfuddin and Murtaza alias Bharo. All of them had children. When Syed Ali had children he shifted from Mutala town near Pengharo Purgano. Mutala that is Muthalo originally known as Muthalo (Mut-Halo). From this name it appears that it was within the jurisdiction of chiefs of Halo tribe and they had bequeathed this Jageer to their maternal grandson. This town does not exist now but its remains are extant in the form of Muthalo Deh and Tapo, at a distance of eight-nine miles east of Shahdadpur. Syed Ali Sindhi and his progeny stayed for a considerable period of ninth century at Muthalo and Syed Ali also died at Muthalo. The Syeds due to their piety, honesty and successful farming during the period of pious Sultan Jam Nizamuddin (866-914 AH) gained influence in the area.

After the scarcity of water near Muthalo, the entire family shifted to the present town of Matiari in the last decade of ninth century AH. The family came to be known as Muthalvi (of Muthala). Since it was a learned family therefore in the subsequent writings Muthalvi was Arabized and changed into Mutalvi. Matiari town was originally a hamlet of Chang Baloch tribe and was known as Mut-Ary. However due to the growing influence of the Syed clan the town came to be known after them as Mutalvi. Publically the

name Matiari became more popular as it was based on the original Mut-Ary.

**(b) Karimpota sub-clan:**

Within forty fifty years after settlement at Matiari in the year 944 AH, a son named Abdul Karim Shah was born to Lal Muhammad Shah alias Laili Shah, a descendent of Syed Sharfuddin Shah, son of Syed Ali Sindhi (Sharfpota), a clan of Jarapota. Syed Abdul Karim Shah gained fame owing to his piety, spiritual devotion and dedication, wisdom, virtue and Sufism (Tassawuf). His father's house was situated at Matiari adjacent to the south-west corner of present Jamia Mosque. There still is a memorial mark on the wall of the Mosque. Shah Lalo was a pious saint of Suharwardi Tariqa (order) and would spend most of his time at Lar where he died and was buried at the grave yard of mystic saint Shahabuddin Qureshi of Suharwardi order.<sup>(1)</sup>

Shah Lalo was a great Sufi saint and he had followers and disciples at various places, some of which were probably in Bulri area. Due to the devotion and dedication of his disciples Abdul Karim Shah after his education and marriage shifted from Matiari to Bulri. The village thereafter came to be known as Syedpur as well as Lalani Loi<sup>(2)</sup>. Since it was an area of Bulri, therefore, this place came to be known as Bulri.

(1) The grave yard of saint Shahabuddin is at a distance of one and a half mile north-west of Badin and in the proper parlance is known as Shah Badi (Shahabuddin) grave yard. Badin town is named after Shahabuddin (Shahabuddin = Shah-Badin = Badin). Shah Lali's grave is prominent in the grave yard.

(2) Village of Shah Karim Lalani (Lalani means son of Lali). A devotee has composed following Bait:

لانی لالی لوی، جت ولایت ونڈ تھی  
معرفت مکان ۾ دڻ تڻ وائی چھو  
ساتیڙی سیکھین پاند پتو تو ٻرو  
سید پیر سندو مان بسی حال ھت کئی



Mioon Shah Karim along with his family spent a considerable period of time there and also breathed his last there in 1032 AH (1623 AD). Mioon Shah Karim while retained his linkage to Suharwardia order of his father, yet gradually he developed greater association with Qadria order. Mioon Shah Karim had eight sons, out of which four had children and came to be known as Karimpotas after the name of their grandfather. His third son Syed Jalal Shah<sup>(1)</sup> was the grandfather of Shah Habib, the father of Shah Abdul Latif.

### **(c) Shah Habib and his family:**

Shah Habib was a great grandson of Mioon Shah Karim. His grandfather Jalal Shah alias Jamal Shah during the times of his father Mioon Shah Karim would spend most of his time at Hala and Matiari. He was at Hala when some robbers took away the cattle heads of a lady and Shah Habib chased them. On the way the robbers killed him and he was buried at the graveyard of Golopur. This graveyard is situated in Deh and Tapo Jama in Taluka Shahdadpur, seven miles north of Bhit where the grave of Jalal Shah (Jamal Shah) is extant. After his martyrdom, his family which was in Matiari returned to their grandfather at Syedpur (Bulri). Jalal Shah (Jamal Shah) son of Syed Abdul Qadus Shah was also a saint and Dervish and he died there. He is buried near the grave of his grandfather Shah Abdul Karim in the south-east direction. He had two sons: Habibullah Shah (Shah Habib) and Abdul Rashid Shah and both of them had children. Habibullah Shah inherited piety and spirituality and after the great Mioon Shah Abdul Karim, amongst all the Karimpotas, Shah Habib

(1) The earlier writers including Mir Ali Sher Qani keeping in view "Bayanal Arfeen" based genealogical tree has indicated his name as Jalal. However in the subsequent period his name has been mentioned as Jamal Shah.

came to be known as the paragon of virtue, abstinence, asceticism, spiritual devotion and ethical excellence. His high moral standards, spiritual enlightenment and asceticism had a great impact on the edification of his son Shah Abdul Latif. Besides this Shah Habib was also a poet amongst the Karimpotas and some of his verses are found within Shah Jo Risalo. Shah Habib had a significant influence on Shah Latif's poetry.

Shah Habib during the life time of his father or after his demise stayed for some time at Matiari town. The place<sup>(1)</sup> where he stayed might have been his home. The reason for stay at Matiari was that he had probably married from there. Later on he developed some differences with his relatives and left Matiari on the advice of Dervish Hashim Shah. According to some traditions Shah Habib had two marriages, one of which was from the Syed family and the other from outside the family. Shah Abdul Latif was born from the second marriage. However, it is not ascertained as to when his first marriage took place and the identity of the sub-clan and relatives is also not known. The available genealogies of clans of Matiari Syeds do not refer to the first marriage of Shah Habib. According to traditions, he had children from both the wives. Nevertheless, all the references about the progeny of Shah Habib pertaining to a period of hundred and twenty five years after the demise of Shah Habib came to surface after the death of Shah Abdul Latif specially during the controversy on the issue of succession (Gadinashini) with

(1) It is said that this house in the latter period was in possession of late Makan Shah. Around circa 1940 there were some Neem trees and there was a small room beside the outer wall. The walls and the lower roof were covered with wooden scales and old mats and the floor was also covered with mats. These artifacts were called Habib Shah Ja Kakh (Straws of Habib Shah). People would frequent this place with reverence and offer prayers and recite Quran and do Chillas (meditation).



specific question regarding the male or female progeny. Therefore it is rather difficult to arrive at a conclusive decision. Yet it is far safer to state that from the second marriage Shah Habib had three sons, out of which only Shah Abdul Latif survived. From his first wife according to references a son Jamal Shah was born and certain other relevant references do indicate that Jamal Shah and Misri Shah were born. According to the genealogical account of Tikhur, Jamal Shah had a son Karim-dino Shah who had no son by the name of Jamal Shah. According to other genealogical accounts he had a son named Jamal Shah who succeeded Shah Abdul Latif as Gadinashin. Beside the son, Shah Habib had a daughter named Bibi Batul<sup>(1)</sup> and she was probably the real sister of Shah Abdul Latif. Including her or excluding her, the two other daughters of Shah Habib have also been mentioned. Mir Qani has mentioned that it is not certain as to which mother had given birth to them, but both of them got married during the life of Shah Habib. Mir Sangi was informed by Ghulam Muhammad Shah Gada that one of them was married into Musa clan of Matiarvi Syeds and the other one was married into Sumbhani clan<sup>(2)</sup>.

According to research of the genealogies, one of the daughters of Shah Habib was married with a son of Hafiz Shah of Essapota clan, descendants of Syed Essa brother of Syed Musa.<sup>(3)</sup> However, according to genealogies and oral traditions it has not yet been confirmed whether any daughter of Shah Habib was married into Sumbhani clan.<sup>(4)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Lataif Latifi, Persian text, P-180-181, therefore it was a conventional lore that she was reverentially called Bibi Batul, Bibi Rani or Bibi Sardar.

<sup>(2)</sup> Lataif Latifi - Persian text P-173

<sup>(3)</sup> According to genealogy of Tikhur, Muhammad Hafiz Shah son of Ghurbo Shah was Pagaro.

<sup>(4)</sup> Sumbhani means progeny of Syed Sumbhani (Bin Abdul Wali Bin Din

#### (d) Birth of Shah Abdul Latif (1102 AH):

According to the popular traditions Shah Habib after his marriage for a considerable period of time had no issue and therefore he invoked the blessings of a Dervish. The Dervish told him that a son would be born to him and he should name him Abdul Latif.<sup>(1)</sup> According to a diary (Baiaz, a chronicle) transcribed in 1300 AH, an old tradition has been narrated which speaks of an anecdote where it is stated that this invocation was made to a spiritually enlightened Dervish Hashim Shah who himself was a Jararpoto Syed and a relative of Shah Habib. According to the genealogical accounts both of them were contemporaries. Shah Habib when he went to see Hashim Shah, the latter told him that "aroma of Latif was coming from Habib"<sup>(2)</sup>. Glad tidings

Muhammad Bin Shah Karim). He had four sons, Abdul Rahman, Abdul Hakeem, Baharo and Abul Fateh. If Shah Habib's daughter was married into Sumbhani then (according to an estimate of succeeding generations and chronology), she must have been married with a son of Sumbha Shah.

<sup>(1)</sup> Mirza Kalich Beg has stated that Shah Habib had no issue and therefore he prayed to a saint who assured him that a son would be born to him who would be a sage of the time (Ghaus) and he should be named Abdul Latif (Ahwal Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai p-13). However Kalich Beg has not mentioned as to where from he had learnt this story and who was the saint who had prayed. This tradition runs in the family of Syeds of Matiarvi and has since persisted and is reliable. After a lot of search this tradition has been obtained by this researcher in writing. Though this writing is of latter day but certainly it has been transcribed from an ancient source. The words in which it has been transcribed can be called an oral tradition of Munimani, the Syed clan of Tikhur. This writing has been preserved with Syeds of Tikhur and a century ago 1300 AH it was transcribed and then on Saturday tenth Rabiul Awal in 1361 AH Hafiz Bismil Tikharai transcribed it. This diary / journal (Baiaz) was perused by this writer with the courtesy of Mr. Qamar Zaman Shah.

<sup>(2)</sup> Dervish Hashim Shah when in ecstatic possession and trance would speak in Hindustani. Probably he had adopted this language after talking with certain visiting devotees of Qalandar Lal Sahbaz. Here we have written his sayings in Sindhi instead of Hindustani.



between circa 1950-1960. At Sui Kanda grave yard, near the beginning of survey number, in the north-western direction and in the east of present irrigation branch near the house of Shah Habib was a ditch which was called Sayatis' Kharr (Ditch of Sayatis). Beside this ditch, there used to be Kandi trees till 1930 which were called Kandas of Shah Habib (Thorn trees of Shah Habib). There was a Haveli of Shah Habib; the remnants of the walls foundation were seen by the people of that era. The first two sons of Shah Habib were born in this haveli and later died there and were buried in the grave yard of Sui Qandar. The graves of the two are still extant.<sup>(1)</sup>

The third son Shah Abdul Latif was also born and brought up in the same house. According to Hijra calendar it was year 1102 AH which is verified from this tradition that at the time of death 1165 AH Shah Habib was 63 years. The literate and learned people till 13<sup>th</sup> century AH (19<sup>th</sup> century) had accepted 1102 Hijra as a year of birth of Shah Abdul Latif. The learned poet of that era, Syed Ghulam Muhammad Shah Gada has extracted this year from his chronological root verse.<sup>(2)</sup>

گدا سال توليد سلطان "پت"  
شيدم زهاتف عنايت شمار

Where Shah Abdul Latif was born? This question has not been answered with certainty by the latter day writers,

<sup>(1)</sup> In 1959 AD this writer visited the house of Shah Habib and witnessed the graves of two brothers of Shah Abdul Latif in a grave yard situated adjacent to the house. These graves had been recently reconstructed and one of the graves bore the epitaph of Abdul Latif and other bore the epitaph of Abdul Rasheed. Earlier both the graves bore the epitaph of Abdul Latif. According to the genealogy of Tikhur, both the brothers of Shah Abdul Latif had been named as Abdul Latif

<sup>(2)</sup> Lataif Latifi, P-204

were given to Shah Habib that a son Abdul Latif would be born to him and his fragrance would permeate throughout the world. Later on, a son was born who was named Abdul Latif but he died in infancy. From the same wife another son was born who was also named Abdul Latif, but unfortunately he could not survive. A third was also born who was again named Abdul Latif and fortunately he survived and became the world famous Shah Abdul Latif. All these three children were born from a lady who was daughter of Urs Fakir Dero, who was a descendant of Qandar Fakir Dero a calipho (deputy) of Ghaus Bahauddin Zakaria, the renowned saint of Multan. Urs Fakir was from a clan titled Dhaonriat of Dero caste with the sub-clan of Sabitpotas. There were two orders (Silsilas) of Dero Fakirs: Sayat or Sabzposh (Green dressed) and Dhoanriat (White dressed). They were spiritually blessed devotees and were called Gambaat Dhani (The caretaker saints of Gambaat area). Sabit Fakir was also a known Dervish as he had once said:

سوالي سچي، سڪ مان جي "ثابت" کي سارين  
تن نڪا تنگي تون جي، نڪي ٿارين.

Urs Fakir had two daughters: the elder one was married with Rub Rakhio Fakir Dero and younger one was married with Shah Habib. After marriage Shah Habib resided in the neighborhood of his in-laws where his home was located near the historical grave yard of Sui Qandar in the western direction. According to revenue record, this house is situated in survey No.134 Deh Sui Qandar, Jagir Taluka Shahdadpur and locally all the people in the area knew about this fact

<sup>(1)</sup> Sabit Fakir was of such exalted status that he was called Mian Sabit. His grave is situated on an elevated platform inside the grave yard of Dero Fakirs at Sui Kandar. There are seven graves out of which the first grave from the west is that of Sabit Fakir and epitaph bears his name Mian Sabit.



because their attention was focused on the fact that Shah Latif's mother was from Dayani clan i.e. she was from old Hala and therefore Shah should have been born there. However, on the other side, the local lore which had more credence was that, Shah's mother was from amongst the Dero Fakirs who lived in the east of Bhit and therefore there was stronger probability of his being born there. Since strong evidence existed in favour of Sui Qandar Dera village, the theory regarding Shah Latif's mother belonging to the Diyani family was consequently negated and references were cited regarding her association with the east of Bhit. One group of writers referred to Bheeanpur and the other one maintained Hala Haveli as the birth place. The Fakirs of Laung Fakir Mahesar whose grave is situated at Shadi Shaheed near Khairpur are also relevant here for the purpose of evidence.

The Fakirs of Dargah (of tomb) had heard that Shah Abdul Latif was born in Bheeanpur or had spent some time in meditation (Chilla), therefore they constructed a big mosque there.<sup>(1)</sup> Later on Mir Sangi also mentioned this in 'Lataif Latifi' and Bhaiapur (correct version is Bheeanhpur) has been shown as the birth place of Shah Latif by Sangi.<sup>(2)</sup> After Sangi Maulvi Din Muhammad Wafai has also repeated the same story in Lutf-ul-Latif.<sup>(3)</sup> On the other hand Leela Ram Watan Mal Lalwani in his book has mentioned the name of Hala Haveli (18 miles south-east of Bhit).<sup>(4)</sup> But he has not indicated the oral sources or other evidence on the basis of which he has mentioned this name (Hala Haveli). In spite of

(1) The place of meditation is near mosque in the northern direction which has been attributed to Shah Sahib. Two villages are adjacent to each other Bheeanhpur, in the northern side and Ladhia Sama in the southern side. (Ladhia Sama is a sub-clan of Sama caste).

(2) Lataif Latifi P-29

(3) Lutf-ul-Latif, Karachi year 1950, P-10

(4) Lalwani's book in English on Shah Abdul Latif, printed in 1889, P-1

that, Gurbuxani by faithfully following Lalwani has also mentioned Hala Haveli as the birth place of Shah Latif.<sup>(1)</sup> Mirza Kalich Beg tried to fuse together Bheeanpur and Hala Haveli and justified this and wrote that: Bhitai Sahib's place of birth was Hala Haveli. It was adjacent to Bheeanpur in the north-east angle. The house where Shah Latif was born later on was converted into a mosque which is still extant on the brink of Naseer canal.<sup>(2)</sup> With the exception of Naseer canal, the rest of the statement of Mirza Kalich is without substance and made without proper cognizance of the surroundings. Shah Latif could not have been born at the same time at Hala Haveli and in the mosque village near Bheeanhpur because Bheeanhpur is at a considerable distance from Hala Haveli. Besides it is not in the south-east but in the north-east. The Bheeanpur is in Taluka Hyderabad and Hala Haveli is in Taluka Tando Allahyar.<sup>(3)</sup>

During years 1958-1959 and later on in the years 1974 and 1976 this writer visited Sui Qandar village and villages near Gambaat and enquired from the local villagers. It was revealed that Shah Abdul Latif lived for a number of years in a village near the grave yard of Sui Qandar in the western direction in his Haveli (residence) and later on he shifted from here to Kotri. Another oral tradition narrated by the villagers was seemingly influenced by the writings of the latter day authors and it was obviously pertaining to the

(1) Gurbuxani, Shah Jo Risalo, volume one, P-11

(2) Mirza Kalich Beg: Ahwal Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, revised and updated by this author, 1392 AH/ 1972AD, P-9.

(3) Mioon Shah Inat was in the last days of his life (circa 1130-1133 AH) when Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai was about 30 years of age and commanded respect with the public as well as Mioon Shah Inat. A Bait was composed by Rizvi. This Bait prophesied a curse and damnation for Hala Haveli as a local chief Dahesar Palijo had incurred the wrath of Inat Rizvi. That Bait ominously predicted that river would change its course and Hala Haveli would lie buried under the sand.



common perception that since the earlier children could not survive, Shah Habib changed the hamlet and shifted from there. But this argument appears to be without weight or substance as Shah Habib was man of a firm determination, forbearance and trust in Allah and despite the death of first two children, named the third child Abdul Latif. How is it possible that bitten by superstition and doubts he could have left his hearth and home?

گامڪي کي ڳڙ ڪري پليجائي پاءُ  
واري جا ولايت جي حالا حوالي لاءِ

Shah Abdul Latif adored Mioon Shah Inat. Had Shah Latif been born in Hala Haveli, this fact would have been in the knowledge of Rizvi (Hala Haveli was at the distance of 4 miles from Nasarpur) and damnation/curse would not have included the name of Hala Haveli. (For the above Bait please refer to Mioon Shah Inat Jo Kalam, preface P-35, Lataif Latifi P-164).

As the local evidence and the remains of the house of Habib Shah provide a strong and firm corroboration in favour of the birth and death of the two children, therefore it can be stated with absolute certainty that the third child Abdul Latif (Shah Abdul Latif) was also born in the same house. However, it is possible that after the safe and sound birth of the child and for the sake of healthy condition of the child and requisite medication, Shah Habib could have shifted to some other place. This supposition would go in favor of Bemeenpur as spiritual disciples and followers specially the singers of his devotional Raag (Fakirs of Sama caste) were already there. This included Mian Ismail Fakir Samo who later on became his caliph<sup>(1)</sup>. Nevertheless if Shah Habib had

<sup>(1)</sup> Lataif Latifi, Persian text p-169

lived there, then it must have been for a short duration and returned to his original Haveli.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### (c) **Childhood and Early Education:**

The date of birth of Shah Abdul Latif has not been mentioned anywhere. However, if his age was 63 years in the month of Safar 1165 AH then his birth would have taken place approximately on 14<sup>th</sup> of Safar 1102 AH.

Before his birth, two of his name sake real brothers had died and he was the third Latif who survived. His parent's joy and exhilaration knew no bounds and he was brought up under exceptional affection and indulgence by his beloved mother and father. This had a definite and positive salutary impact on his personality, growth and development. During the childhood his constant companion, friend and playmate was his maternal cousin Muhammad Alam Dero. During his childhood Latif's centre of socialization was his home village and his circle would extend to the periphery of Gambaat. During this time Latif would visit the houses of his mother's sister and other relatives, that is, in and around the villages of Dera Fakirs within the habitations of Gambaat.<sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> On queries by this author in year 1964 late Qazi Hakeem Muhammad Bakhsh at Nasarpur (19<sup>th</sup> August 1964) informed with certitude that Syed Jeeandal Shah originally belonged to Hala Haveli but later on settled at village Usman Shah Ji Huri. He used to speak that Bhittai Sahib was not born at Hala Haveli but at the elder age he used to pass through Hala Haveli to visit his devotees at Ladhha Sama and Bemeenpur. This route was like this: Bhit, Udero Lal, Hala Haveli, Nasarpur and from there onwards to Ladhha Sama and Bemeenpur, both of which are adjacent.

<sup>(2)</sup> Gambaat is the name of a vast area. According to present geographical position this area was within the jurisdiction of Taluka Shahdadpur, and along the railway track of Shahdadpur and Tando Adam on the western side up to greater canal of Sukkur Barrage and on the northern side up to Maldasi and Golopir and in the south was up to village Mullo Makhani. Since the time of Sama dynasty this was a vast area. During



As a result of the aforementioned childhood socialization, the pure and pristine Sindhi language spoken by the tribe of Dero Fakirs, which was also his mother tongue, left an indelible imprint on the mind of child Latif and he acquired the language in its chaste and immaculate form. Later on this became the harbinger of his future command, mastery and excellence in the Sindhi language.

That era was of Maktab education and according to which standard instruction was imparted about the Holy Quran, basic Sindhi and primary Persian. The parents of Latif did not send him to any Maktab immediately for fear of separation. However, his education was conducted at home. Both his father and mother were spiritually and intellectually endowed persons. When Latif came of age, according to traditions he was sent to the learned pious teachers for learning of Holy Quran. Their single minded teaching of the Holy Quran had a permanent impact on Latif's mind and heart. One of the most notable teachers at the Maktab was Mioon Noor Muhammad Bhatti. He was a resident of Waeen<sup>(1)</sup> situated at a distance of 8 miles from Gambaat-the hub of Dera tribe. Mioon Noor Muhammad was a staunch devotee and held Shah Habib in high esteem. For the teaching of Latif, Shah Habib arranged for the teacher's residence at his village. Though the education could not continue beyond the Maktab stage, Mioon Noor Muhammad

the Tarkhan period this area was a fief of Shah Qasim Beglar. He had constructed the castle of Gambaat, the remnants of which existed till 1976 at a short distance towards western side near the village of Mithan Fakir Dero and were witnessed by this author.

(1) Waeen i.e. small Waun means a small hamlet which has been presented as Waeen by Sangi, Mirza Kalich Beg and Lalwani. Sangi has intimated that this village is near to Oderolal. Lalwani who had conducted inquiry about this in 1889 had apprised that this village is at a distance of 4 miles from Oderolal and 12 miles from Bhit and has informed : "Where Abras live at present." (English book by Lalwani printed in 1889, P-11).

could visit Shah Habib frequently and Latif maintained uninterrupted contacts with his teacher and a sort of informal education continued. When Shah Latif finally settled at Bhit, he called his teacher and provided him a separate parlor (otak - a sitting room in the house). During his youth and afterwards Shah Latif persisted in this close personal association and held animated academic discourses with his beloved teacher.<sup>(1)</sup>

The early ten years of Latif's childhood were spent with his maternal parents (Dero Fakirs) in Sui Qandar Gambaat area. During this period Shah Latif must have enjoyed the childhood's frolicsome gambols with his friends on the sand dunes situated near Gambaat. He must have enjoyed the childhood games during the summer rains. At this early age he visited all the villages and hamlets surrounding Gambaat and heartily enjoyed the love and affection of the young and old. As a result of these sweet childhood memories, he later on reminisced in Sur Sarang the rain thunder over the Gambaat:

واهندان وچ تي، گزبون دونه گنباٽ

The childhood friendship with these friends and playmates (the children of Dero Fakirs) later on grew into a lifelong intimate association with them who became his devotees,

(1) The Otak: (parlor-outer room) of Mioon Noor Muhammad was in existence till 1954. Being situated in the middle it was bulldozed by the authorities during widening of main road leading to the mausoleum. A small well still remained in the centre of the road which was covered with a lid and was witnessed by this writer himself. There was a small lime stone covered platform inside Mioon's otak. The progeny of Mian used to take special care of this platform because when Shah Habib would visit his teacher he would sit on it. Mioon Wali Muhammad son of Mioon Noor Muhammad was held in high esteem by Shah Habib. So much so when Shah Habib breathed his last Mioon Wali Muhammad washed his body and led his funeral prayers.



disciples and trusted Fakirs. Amongst these Fakirs Ajjam Fakir Dero and Sukh Fakir Dero were his Fakirs in attendance. Jani Fakir Dero was also his childhood friend whose son Inayat became a fast devotee of Shah Latif. However, amongst all his adherents the most intimate confidant was his own maternal cousin Muhammad Alam Dero son of Rab Rakhio Fakir. Later on he became his very near and dear Fakir and calipho. Shah Latif appointed him as chief of the spiritual music soiree and Zikkar (divine litany). Generally he came to be known calipho Muhammad Alam Zakir. After the demise of Shah Sahib he took over the entire organization of the Fakirs and rendered yeoman's service. He died at Bhit Shah and his grave is situated outside the tomb of Shah Sahib in the southern direction and in the east of Tamal Fakir's Tajjal (vault) adjacent to the northern row of the graves. In southern row it is the second grave in the west.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The period of education under father Shah Habib

After the incipient madressa education of childhood the education up to adolescence and youth was acquired by Shah Latif under the guidance and affection of his father Shah Habib. Both used to remain together as they were inseparable companions. Shah Habib himself was educated in religion and would write amulets for the blessings of his devotees. Sometimes he would compose Baits leading to trance and was intimate with scholars and mystics, besides himself being an ascetic and a man of great virtue in his own right. Mir Ali Sher Qani has called him a notable, of his devotees noble soul of Karimi order and a righteous personage of outstanding status, capable of ecstatic transcendental miracles.<sup>(1)</sup> His personal solicitude, guidance, spiritual insight and blessings always guided his beloved son Latif. On the other hand a youthful Latif himself developed zest and zeal for attaining higher state of introspection, greater spiritual heights, moral edification and enlightenment.

Now Shah Latif shifted to Kotri. Young Latif would visit and undertake frequent excursions in the northern side from Hala to Bulri downwards in Larr and in the west from Kotri area to the east up to Bhit in Gambaat and from there towards the south up to Nasarpur.

<sup>(1)</sup> میر حبیب اللہ کہ ہمارا ذات اقدس پیش ناموس سلسلہ کریمہ و بکرامات ظاہرہ اظہر من الشمس است " (مقالات الشعراء، ص ۳۵۷) . " ہمیشہ صاحب وجد و حال بود واستغراق کمال داشت " . (تحفہ الکرام، مطبع ۱۷۳x۳) ناصری دہلی .



#### (a) Relocation of Shah Habib from Sui Qandar and settlement at Kotri Mughal

When Shah Latif was 10-12 years old his father relocated his family from Sui Qandar village and settled at Kotri Mughal at a distance of 8-9 miles west-south. According to local traditions the reason of relocation was a request of certain Dera Fakirs to Habib Shah. Some of the Dervishes from amongst the Fakirs confided that "a sage has been conceived" and therefore in future there would be visitations from the devotees disturbing their privacy. Hence it was advisable for either of the parties to relocate. Shah Habib went home and enquired about this phenomenon of conception from his wife and she confirmed this.

It appears that this matter might have caused relocation of Shah Habib from Sui Qandar. Despite this tradition, however, it is apparent that due to the death of his father-in-law Urs Fakir Dero, Shah Habib relocated from Sui Qandar and Gambaat area. One of the main reasons of relocation was the special invitation from the Raees of Kotri Mirza Beg Mughal who was one of his devotees.

He invited Shah Habib to Kotri because he needed his blessings, support and spiritual comfort. According to a version of Mir Sangi, Shah Habib established his home outside Kotri town.<sup>(1)</sup> It is estimated that this house was adjacent to the haveli fortification of Mirza Beg Mughal on the western direction and beyond the west of which was jungle and shrubbery.

Shah Habib now onwards kept his beloved son in his companionship and concentrated his full attention on his edification so that the latter may reach the elevated heights intellectually, ethically and spiritually. He would keep him in his enduring amity and where ever he went he introduced his son to the leading scholars, sages and saints of the time. He

<sup>(1)</sup> Such reference is in the poem of Sangi (Lataif Latifi, P-6).

took him to the ancestral abode Matiari and to the tomb of his great grandfather and introduced him to the Fakirs of Shah Karim. He also took him along to Shahpur-Nasarpur and let him meet Shah Inat. Thus an adolescent, genteel, and compassionate Latif learnt a great deal from these visits and meetings. Now his range of visits and meetings gradually progressed and it ranged from Hala in the north, down to Lari, Bulri and Thatta, in the east from Gambaat onwards to Beccahnpur, Hala Haveli, Shahpur and up to Nasarpur. However, most of his time was spent at Kotri.

Shah Habib being an indulgent father could not stop his beloved son from playing with his friend and there are traditions that Shah Latif in this age would play archery and blind man's bluff with his mates. At the same time Shah Habib with his exceptional attention, higher instruction and mystical vision prepared the young sensitive Latif for his future journey on the path of righteousness and moral rectitude. Shah Habib showed the path of Tariqat and exhorted him to subdue carnal desires for attaining purity of heart and mind. Under the instructions and guidance of his father and mentor, young Latif resorted to solitude of woodlands and commenced spiritual meditation for self discipline. Shunning the maddening crowds, the haunts where he carried on Chillas (meditation) are not generally known. However, there are three haunts about which some knowledge is available. These haunts are still well known and preserved because Latif would spend most of his time in meditation there.

One of these is a large size shrub, turned into a fully grown tree (locally called Lai) and subsequently it gained fame and the name of "Lal Lao" (red tree). Under the grove of this tree Latif would squat on end. This tree was beside the home of Shah Latif in the nearby woodland on the western side. In the past there used to be a graveyard of a saint and later on in



memoriam of the meditation haunt of Shah Latif, a mosque a well and some huts were erected. The remains thereof were extant till 1999. The Lai tree grove under which Latif would squat on end was near the mosque in the northern direction. At this place an old twisted "Lao" is still standing which is said to have grown from the root of original "Lai". The second extant remain; probably was the same original location of Bhit where Shah Latif later on constructed his 'Hujro' (residence). Once a herdsman Qalandar Shoro saw Latif at this place squatting in a state of meditation. The she camel suddenly shied at seeing Latif and Qalandar rushed helter skelter to his village which was at a distance of two miles and nervously informed his father Sahib Dino who accompanied him back to the venue. The old man Sahib Dino told his son that Shah Habib's son frequented this venue for the sake of solitude and meditation and the next time he should seek Latif's blessings while crossing his path.

The third extant remain is that which is now called Shah Jo Kando (thistle tree of Shah). This is situated at a distance of one and half mile in the north east (east of railway station on Kumb Dharon-Shahdampur road) and there still is a grove on the site. The preceding tradition which is based on the ocular evidence of Qalandar Shoro and corroborated by his father Wadero Sahib Dino testifies that Shah Habib had been consciously training his beloved son Abdul Latif with immense dedication and determination so that, the latter may ultimately attain spiritual excellence predicted by the Dervish of Matiari Hashim Shah. When Latif progressed spiritually and achieved the highest pedestal of righteousness through virtue and morality, his father took him to Hashim Shah. Hashim Shah witnessed manifest signs of sainthood in young Latif but remarked: "Habib's son is yet to achieve maturity." This exhortation from the Dervish accelerated and regenerated zeal and zest in the young saint (باز نوع اختیار کرد) in the young saint (کرد).

and he steadily traversed the higher altitudes of spiritual serenity, introspection and self purgation. This phenomenon eloquently authenticated by a dialogue between the father and the son which took place during the time of divine meditation by an engrossed Latif under the thistle tree. Latif would frequently share with his father the locations, time and experience of his elevating and exhilarating contemplation. Once upon a time after a hiatus of about two days, a sand storm blew over the place and covered the thistle tree and young Shah Latif underneath with sand. After searching his son and finding him lost in a state of trance, father Shah Habib was moved to tears and uttered:

"لڳي لڳي واء، ويس انگڙا لتجي"

Listening to the captivating voice of his father, Latif replied in the same enchanting tone<sup>(1)</sup>

"پتي کتي پسا، پسڻ ڪارڻ پرين جي"

The uplifting reply of Latif in the same mellifluous tenor and tone and the epigrammatic completion of the Bait (verse) at such a young age is indeed reflective of the higher poetic consciousness of Latif and is symptomatic of the purity of his heart and exuberating excellence of spirituality. This line of verse exquisitely communicates his state of self abnegation, overwhelming adoration of the Maker, patience of the seeker (Salik) and saturation with divine love.<sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> The reading of Lataif Latifi (P-93-94) 'پسن ڪارڻ' Lalwani's English book (Shah Latif, P-18) presents a different reading 'پسن ڪارڻ'.

<sup>(2)</sup> Sangi has narrated a common place tradition pertaining to this important event and has obscured the original event (Lataif Latifi Persian text P-144-145) that Shah Latif was a small boy and had taken refuge in the hollow of a thistle tree or inside the sand dune during the child's play. His play mates could not find him and then Latif stayed back and prayed. This tradition of child play has been added later on to illustrate Shah's miracles at a tender age. However, the meaningful verses



After the first meeting with Hashim Shah, Shah Latif met him after a span of three years and by this time he was 18 years old and had undergone an uninterrupted meditational prayers regimen. When Shah Habib presented him in audience with Dervish Hashim Shah: he cast a mystical glance of love and affection at Shah Latif and blessed him with this prayer: لطیف جو چراغ روشن ٿیندو (Latif's lamp will illuminate).

This means in future Latif's own lamp will brighten or it is illuminated right now but in future it will become more enlightened.<sup>(1)</sup>

In both the cases this response was felicitating: on one side Shah Habib was assured that his parental education's objective had been achieved. On the other hand besides getting felicitational prediction and glad tidings about the bright future of his son, he exhorted him to accelerate his pace on the path towards the ultimate destination of sufistic sanctification and consecration. Shortly Dervish Hashim Shah died on 12<sup>th</sup> Rabiul Awal 1102 AH and at that time Shah Latif was 18 years old. The next phase of his moral edification was in his own hands as his affectionate father had already fulfilled his obligation and Dervish Hashim Shah had already blessed him by invoking his name.

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exchange between Shah Latif and Shah Habib indicates that Shah Latif was above the age of child play and was possessed of spirituality and piety due to his prolonged and persistent meditation in youth.

<sup>(1)</sup> The tradition, thenceforth carries the following phrase:

Later on (Habib Shah) understood that excellence had been achieved and there after he settled at Bhit and had devotees.

It is obvious that this phrase has been added by a latter narrator. It does not correspond with the oral expression of Hashim Shah as the Dervish had uttered word in Hidustani "مویا" (will take place) and had not uttered the words "مویا ہے" (has already become).

## CHAPTER THREE

### The period of self education and steps towards spiritual excellence (1102-1142 AH)

Young Latif's period of self education persisted over 20-22 years. This period of his life was devoted to quest and search for truth, spiritual comprehension and understanding of esoteric verities. Though his search for divine truth continued throughout his life but from the perspective of time and space, this period is divided in two segments. The first segment comprises 15 years (1120-1135 AH) when he was still in the initial stage on the path of sufistic quest and search. His second period lasting 5 to 7 years (1135-1142 AH) was when he besides his peregrination concentrated on meditation at the perennial abode of Bhit. The persistent quest and search during these two periods culminated into positive finale in his later life. During this period his practical and intellectual endeavors were directed towards five signposts: (1) for observation, experience and comprehension he undertook peregrinations. (2) Performed matrimonial obligation. (3) In order to understand and absorb the practical and liturgical nuances of mystical life he tried to assimilate in its entirety the biography, hagiology, mannerisms and traditions of his great grandfather Mioon Shah Karim (4) in order to delve deep into the mystical initiation and divine cognition with their overarching transcendental phenomenological perception, he turned towards the finer philosophical enunciations and truths expressed by Mioon



Shah Abdul Karim in his poetry and subtly secreted in the mysteries of Masnavi of Maulana Rumi. (5) For exhorting the common folks he decided to disseminate his message through Sindhi Abyat (verses) and Wais (rhymed odes).

Shah Latif on his own initiative started his meaningful peregrinations and meetings from the same habitats and locations where he had already been in the past along with his father. Of these on one side were Matiari, Ganjo Takar and then Bulri and Thatto. Bulri was his paternal abode where the graves of his great grandfather Mioon Shah Karim and Abdul Qudus Shah were situated. On the northern side the historic town of old Hala was near to Kotri and it was the first abode of Syeds. It was the centre of scholars and Sufi saints during the time of Shah Latif. Golopir's graveyard at a distance of ten miles east was also of great significance for him because his grandfather Jalal Shah (Jamal Shah) Shaheed's grave was located there. In the south-east on the banks of Sangri outlet, the habitations of the saints were worth visitation. Specially Beeahnur and ahead of that Shahpur and Nasarpur area were significant, where a great poet and Sufi mystic Mioon Shah Inat was still alive and active. Therefore it became a favorite haunt of Shah Latif.

On the banks of Sangri outlet, in the northern side was a tomb of Mashaikh Hoti and during his life time or thereafter two of his spiritually endowed sons Ahmed and Muhammad Mubin had met Mioon Shah Karim. On the southern side there were the graves of certain sages which also belonged to the times of Mioon Shah Karim. These sages included Shaikh Bhirkio Katiar, Dervish Pali, Pinio Sahar, Makhdoom Muhammad Ismail Soomro Agham Koti, Shaikh Muso. Rukundin son of Ratto (of Joon area) Miran Katiar, Mehran Fakir Nohorio, Makhdoom Sabir Walhari, Syed Sajjan Sawai of Matiari and Jarkas Danani (of Walhar and Wangi area). In the context of Mioon Shah Karim it was but natural for Shah

Latif to have visited these hearths and haunts of the Sufi saints. It is also natural to assume that Shah Latif must have visited other haunts to seek guidance from diverse sages, seers and saints. Towards Talhar and Badin area there were the graves and tombs of his elders. From the progeny of Mioon Shah Karim two saints, Syed Piniladho and Syed Mangiladho had settled at Talhar area. Both were well known for their piety and godliness. Still ahead near Badin in the graveyard of Shahabuddin Suharwardi, the father of Mioon Shah Karim, Shah Lalo was buried (this graveyard is now popularly known as Shah Badi's Muqam). It is therefore safe to assume and postulate that in order to seek the saintly abodes and haunts of Sangri, Shah Latif must have travelled up to Badin.

During these peregrinations the first five or six years were spent in the visitations of divergent and varied abodes and haunts, graveyards and tombs of saints and sages and the inevitable intimate interaction with artisans of different professions along with consequential and minute study of common folks life and living patterns. During this period most of his visitations were to the mausoleum of his great grandfather Mioon Shah Karim where he imbibed deeply the elixir of Tasawuf (mysticism). Now he was determined to scale the elevated heights of spiritual excellence but had to return to earthly reality of the corporeal life. This happened when his marriage was solemnized with the assent and acquiescence of his affectionate father. Then he was 24 years age.

### **Marriage Ceremony:**

The era of adolescence and early adulthood had ended but it was the inception of his journey on the path of intellectual growth leading to climatic enlightenment. His absolute attention and endeavor was focused on attaining the



Olympian heights of poetic inspiration and rapture. He knew that time was of great essence and one had to plod through thick and thin. It was indeed against his sufistic determination and endeavor to sit back at home after attaining the conjugal bliss. His views about matrimony were in concurrence with that of his great grandfather who regarded the marriage as a terrible woe and affliction and had married to just observe a social formality.<sup>(1)</sup> According to Shah Latif so long as the seeker would not find the sought-after, he would not partake of divine benediction to seek success on the path of mystical enunciation, ethereal emancipation and liberation (from needs).<sup>(2)</sup> Despite Shah's commitment to moral edification and excellence of character, he decided to enter into matrimonial bonds.

The noble chief (Rais) Mirza Mughal Beg of Kotri was killed in a violent encounter with the people of Dal tribe in 1126 AH.<sup>(3)</sup> His family felt insecure and unguarded and now they had no other sincere protector except Shah Habib. Mirza Beg had a son who had died at an early age and was left with only one well-mannered, genteel daughter Sayeda Begum (or Saeeda Begum). Shah Habib considered it imperative to extend support and succor to the helpless and hapless family of his dead devotee. He prevailed upon his son Latif to marry Sayeda Begum. Latif had seen the gentle lady before and was already enamored of her but would not give vent to his love.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) "Shah Karim Bulri Waray Jo Kalam" compiled and edited by Dr. Umer Bin Muhammad Daudpoto, 1937-PP-9-10.

(2) Lataif Latifi (Persian text), P-104.

(3) Mir Ali Sher Qani has derived a chronological root of this event as "یہ یں" or "منزل به بود" the grave of Mirza beg is located near the grave yard of Mioon Wanheen, inside the grave yard of Shah Qasim Beg Lal bearing the same year.

(4) The myth about Shah Latif's visit to the Haveli of Mirza Beg to give blessings and hold the small finger of Sayeda Begum is against the civilization, culture, customs and traditions of Sindh. Besides it was

Prior to entering the matrimonial bond he had divested himself of this infatuation because of his esoteric patience. Now Latif consented to marry this old flame to honour the wish of his father and to look after the distraught family. This fact is substantiated by viewing the matrimonial demeanor of Shah Latif as he had already reached an advanced level of mystical wisdom and spiritual erudition and had entered into conjugal bondage without any amorous notion and fancy and of course it was devoid of any romantic idealism.<sup>(1)</sup>

After marriage Shah's attitude towards his family was exceptionally honorable and decent but far from being amorous. According to traditions when Bibi Sahiba was expecting, she desired a Palla fish. A close confidant of Shah Latif Winhyoon Fakir got a palla after a great deal of exertion and distress and rushed back breathing heavily. Shah Latif after knowing the cause of discomfort of his Fakir remarked: "When the fetus at embryonic stage has caused so much vexation, God knows alone what he will be up to when he is born and brought up". In another incident when an old maid

against the high moral character of Shah Latif, (the cultivation of which had been overseen with meticulous care by his father). In reality Mir Ali Sher Qani had narrated a story just to articulate a miracle ascribed to Shah Latif that Mughal was initially hostile and inimical to Shah Latif because the latter had an infatuation for Mughal's daughter. This story developed subsequently and Mir Sangi was the first to write this episode down and other writers mindlessly followed the apocryphal accounts. From the profile of Shah Latif's matrimonial life this fabricated story is disproved absolutely.

(1) Mirza Kalich Beg had formed a correct opinion about the marriage of Shah Latif when he asserted: "He did not marry out of infatuation", he was not obsessed with love of his wife as he had not married with her after dalliance. He had just complied with the Shariah edicts and to simply start a family life. Since marriage was a Sunnah of Holy Prophet, he acquiesced. (Ahwal Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai -P.P. 60-61)



was reprimanded by Bibi Sahiba, Shah Latif did not like this. The fetus was never born due to miscarriage.<sup>(1)</sup>

In fact even before the start of the matrimonial life, Shah Latif's personality had under gone radical change. He felt perturbed at discomfort and distress caused to his Fakirs at the cost of compliance with the whims and notions of his wife. He used to leave his home even before marriage and would spend most of his time outside of Kotri. After marriage he did not settle at home and persisted in his peregrinations till he finally came to dwell at Bhit. Mir Sangi has narrated that even then Shah Latif would spend most of his time in his journeys and trekkings and when he used to be at Bhit he would spend most of his time in the mosque performing the five time prayers with congregations. Besides he would spend most of the time out of his home and would rarely go inside the Haveli which was adjacent to mosque on the northern side.<sup>(2)</sup>

### **Understanding the ways and manners of Shah Karim**

As mentioned earlier, during the second phase of his life which was characterized by arduous journeys, Shah Latif frequented the tomb of Shah Karim many a time and

<sup>(1)</sup> Mirza Kalich Beg, "Ahwal Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai", P-26. Lalwani, English book "Shah Latif" P-21. Din Muhammad Wafai, "Lutf-ul-Latif", P-P 96-98

<sup>(2)</sup> Lataif Latifi, Persian text, P-127. Despite these indications Mir Sangi had composed two poems "Afsana-e-Ishq and Ishq Bazi" celebrating Shah's marriage. He has also made a mountain out of mole hill regarding Shah's wife based on insinuation made by Mir Ali Sher Qani though these were against the traditions, high moral caliber and character of Shah Latif. These myths are related to the fictional events leading to Shah's admittance into the Haveli to bless young Pardah-clad ailing Mughal girl. It also alleges that he held little finger of the girl and cursed his father when he was jilted in love and also expressed glee on the death of her brother (Vide Lataif Latifi, Persian text, P-59-73).

participated in Zikr and Sama (litany and devotional music source) and intensely absorbed the intimate and esoteric knowledge. He later on established this institution at Bhit. In order to learn more about Shah Karim he held prolonged discourses with Jat Fakirs which developed into a lifelong relation. He acquired the biography and a book of instructions about Shah Karim (probably Bayanul-Arfeen) and he kept a copy of this book for his regular reading and also constantly carried it with himself during his travels.<sup>(1)</sup> Shah Latif's mind and thought were immensely impacted by Shah Karim's humility, austerity, ascetic life style, tendency for natural observation and a keen study of humdrum daily chores and rural professions in various walks of life.

Mioon Shah Karim presented his moral edifications and emphasized higher moral values and character through mystical versification, his original and other Sufis compositions through the medium of exquisite and superb Sindhi Abyat. This way of conduct presented itself as a shining example to Shah Latif. Prior to this, he had got such training through the easily comprehensible Abyat of Shah Habib. Mioon Shah Inat Rizvi at that time was the reigning monarch of the sufistic poetry. Shah Abdul Latif had spent his early childhood in the area of Gambaat which was at a distance of 20 miles from Shahpur- the residence of Mioon Shah Inat. Shahpur and Nasarpur were also at equal distance from Kotri. The Abyat of Shah Inat were very popular and their reverberation had reached the ears of Shah Latif during his childhood and youth.

<sup>(1)</sup> The book which was witnessed by Mir Abdul Hussain Sangi was called a Risalo by him which contained biographical material on Mioon Shah Karim. (Lataif Latifi P-122). Mirza Kalich Beg has written it as "Shah Karim Bulri Waray Jo Risalo". Probably these references mean "Bayan-ul-Arfeen".



Initially his father Shah Habib took him to Shah Inat who showered affection on him. Later on Shah Abdul Latif commenced visiting Shah Inat on his own and imbibed spiritual solace from the master. These discourses and communions started from 1122 AH when Shah Latif was 20 years old and persistently continued for about ten to eleven years till 1133 AH i.e. till the demise of Mioon Shah Inat. Owing his fresh youthful and genteel demeanor Shah Latif learned immensely from Shah Inat and this superb inspiration is reflected overwhelmingly in the poetry of Shah Latif.<sup>(1)</sup>

**Spiritual and aesthetic excellence: understanding the mysteries of esoteric, sufistic initiation (Saluk) and divine cognition (Irfan, Marfat) secreted in Masnavi of Maulana Rum.**

The spiritual and aesthetic excellence of Shah Latif led him to the search for absolute truth and verity. He unraveled the secrets of reaching the essence of Islamic enlightenment through Bayanul Arifeen of Mioon Shah Karim and Masnavi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi. During his educational phase, Shah Latif concentrated on understanding Masnavi. It is not known how Shah got the initial inkling about Masnavi but probably going through the biography and instructions of Mioon Shah Karim, he came to know about the significance, majesty and grandeur of Masnavi. Mioon Shah Inat remembered by heart verses from the Masnavi and the Diwan Shams Tabriz.<sup>(2)</sup> It is still hazardous to speculate about the person who initiated him to Masnavi but it can be asserted

<sup>(1)</sup> "Mioon Shah Inat Jo Kalam" (Sindhi Adabi Board, 1963 AD) contains the detailed explication by this writer (Muqadma P-89-106) at that time, the year of demise was not known, but now it has been confirmed that Mioon Shah Inat died in 1132 AH.

<sup>(2)</sup> "Shah Karim Bulri Waray Jo Kalam, updated by Dr. Umer Bin Muhammad Daudpoto, 1937 AD.

with certitude that the prolonged association and communion with certain scholars of Thatta might have led Shah Latif to greater and deeper introduction to Masnavi. He decided to keep Masnavi with himself forever. During this time Mohammad Salah son of an eminent scholar and sage Mohammad Arif of Tando Qaiser-Dasori who was known to have command over Persian language and literature and was fully conversant with Masnavi became a disciple of Shah. Shah Latif started reading and listening to Masnavi from him and this practice continued till the later period of Shah's life.<sup>(1)</sup> Shah's excessive interest in Masnavi became so well known that once the Ruler of Sindh Mioon Noor Muhammad Kalhoro sent him a nicely calligraphed copy of Masnavi as a gift. A keener listening and profound understanding of Masnavi had an enduring impact on the agile mind and genuine heart of Shah Latif and this consequently guided him to his ultimate truth: the secret of terrestrial and celestial Masnavi lies in ceaseless pursuit of excellence so that a Salik should reach the exalted status of divine cognition and be one with the Absolute Truth.

**Peregrinations and meeting people of different professions, observation and comprehension**

Shah Latif instead of settling at one place and to indolently confine himself to mundane housekeeping decided to undertake arduous peregrinations to observe and comprehend the natural phenomenon, reflect on the mysterious expanse of the universe, to ponder over the intricate relationship between the Creator and creatures, and to wonder philosophically at vicissitude of life and appreciate

<sup>(1)</sup> This fact was narrated to this writer by Mioon Abdullah (age 89 years) a descendant of Maulvi Muhammad Saleh. He informed that he had seen writing in this regard by Maulvi Muhammad Salah.



variations and varieties of human nature and character. In that period he visited various sites, habitats and habitations inside and outside of Sindh. However, the intimacies pertaining to these visitations has not been preserved in writing. He visited Jat Fakirs at Cutch who later on became his disciples. His journey towards Jesalmir in the east has also been ascertained now. In the western side of Sindh he undertook visits of Kohistan and Lasbela and he also journeyed to the east of Sindh, Thar and northern side (Uttar). He met people from all professions and vocations and from all walks of life and held lengthy discourses with them and learnt about the intricacies and mores of their trades and crafts. The intimate knowledge about his close interaction with a variegated and divergent set of professionals is convincingly demonstrated in different Wais and verses of several Surs and Dastans (chapters and sub-chapters) of his Risalo.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### CHAPTER FOUR

### **Period of Permanent settlement at Bhit, Ascetic benediction and training, esoteric excellence and evolution of divine cognition (1142-1161 AH)**

Shah Latif's life's early twenty years, from his adolescence to his mature youth were devoted to hardihood, a keen and penetrative sense of observation and intimate assessment and evaluation of nature and mankind. From the perspective of quest of absolute truth and internal verity this period was of an exceptional struggle, endeavor and exertion. Through sustained process of the study and observation of external phenomenon, he was able to look into his heart and soul and enrich his aesthetic and spiritual being with transcendental enlightenment i.e. faith in and cognition of the divine Reality. Now he was forty years old and had attained spiritual maturity in all respects. Having achieved the pinnacle of spiritual intuition and esoteric insight, a new era of creativity and regeneration had just commenced. He devoted his endeavors towards accomplishing excellence in divine cognition besides disseminating guidance and imparting training to his disciples in the realm of asceticism and self abnegation. This period of Shah's life comprised about twenty years and can be divided with certitude into the following phases, signifying his personal undertakings and endeavors:

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<sup>(1)</sup> See chapter on Shah's thought in his Poetry.



- (a) Permanent settlement and dwelling at Bhitt Shah.
- (b) The demise of Shah Habib and Latif's ascension to the position of the Master (Murshid).
- (c) Establishment of the Fakiri order and management thereof.
- (d) Formation of institution of Raag and structure of Sams and Zikr.
- (e) Maintenance and construction of the elder's tombs.
- (f) Visiting the disciples to enquire about their welfare and discourses with the learned saints and sages of the age.
- (g) Conversations with the learned scholars of Sindh.

#### (a) Permanent Settlement and dwelling at Bhitt.

There is no authentic reference available about Shah Latif's settlement at Bhitt.<sup>(1)</sup> However, whenever hearsay anecdotes were heard by Mir Abdul Hussain Khan Sangi, these were faithfully recorded and transcribed by him. Lataif Latifi and the same were eagerly repeated by Mirza Kalich Beg and Lilaram Lalwani in their books. There is

<sup>(1)</sup> Lataif Latifi, Persian text 1967AD P-69 and also PP 42-43 and 36. Similarly in "Ahwal-e-Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai" (1972 AD edition) Mirza Kalich Beg mentions at one place that Shah Latif shifted from Kotri to Bhitt during the life time of Mirza Beg Mughul due to animosity and ill-will of the latter (P-34). At another place he has mentioned that "soon after the demise of his father Shah Abdul Latif settled at Bhitt" (P-38). At another spot he narrates that Shah Latif had blessed Gulla at Bhitt (P-86). However, at another page he mentions that Shah settled at Bhitt in the later part of his life (P-36). There is a contradiction in the statements of Kalich Beg. Lalwani in his English book "Shah Latif" (1890 edition) referring to Shah's marriage has stated that he himself settled at Bhitt and would spend most of his time there whereas his father and his family stayed back at Kotri as he could not persuade his father to settle at Bhitt. It is not known that when Shah Latif permanently settled at Bhitt with family but his disciples informed Lalwani that Shah Sahib had finally settled at Bhitt after the demise and burial of his father at Bhitt (P-13).

remarkable contradiction in the statements of these three authors, and therefore, no dependable conclusion can be drawn from them. Mir Sangi had received three divergent statements according to which: (1) Soon after the marriage with the daughter of Mirza Beg Mughal, Shah Latif had shifted from Kotri to Bhitt. (2) He had shifted after the demise of his father (3) He settled at Bhitt Shah after the termination of peregrinations. According to first indication and evidence Shah had settled at Bhitt in 1124 AH before or after the demise of Mirza Beg Mughal. According to second evidence he had settled after the demise of Shah Habib in 1144 AH and according to third indication he had settled much later at the fagend of his life. According to the statement the period pertaining to his settlement at Bhitt Shah extends over twenty years i.e. 1124 to 1144 AH. There is no doubt that it must have taken considerable time for Shah to decide to settle there and then finally he came down to settle at Bhitt. According to some other conjectures this period might have been up to seven years maximum (1135-1142 AH).

There was no immediate reason for shifting from Kotri after marriage. The purpose of marriage was to extend protection to the distraught family which once was an affluent household and therefore leaving the town of Kotri in favour of a deserted habitat (Bhitt) would not have been an appropriate choice. Probably the decision to leave Kotri was taken when all the members of Mughal Haveli (house hold) had passed away. It appears in certain traditions that Bibi Sayeda Begum had only one brother alias Golo who died soon after the marriage of Shah Latif and her mother died 10-12 years later in 1135 AH. According to one tradition Shah Latif was at Bhitt when the famous singer Gulla performed there and Shah Latif blessed her.<sup>(1)</sup> She was benefited from

<sup>(1)</sup> Lataif Latifi, P-86.



the blessings and became the wife of Ruler of Sindh Mian Noor Muhammad Kalhoro and the mother of Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoro, the future sovereign of Sindh. Even if this tradition is deemed correct, then it is probable that Gulla must have performed at Bhit around 1135 AH when Shah Latif was living there intermittently. Narrating the tale of Gulla, Sangi has asserted that that some ill-wishers informed Noor Muhammad Kalhoro that "he is that Syed who has planned to make Bhit his abode".<sup>(2)</sup>

It has been narrated earlier that since childhood Shah Latif had been visiting Gambaat and adjacent sand dunes and later on in adolescence and in youth frequently strolled there. He would squat for days on end in solitude and pray to Lord. "The thistle of Shah" (Shah Jo Kando) was situated in the northern part of these sand dunes and Shah would often pray under the tree. The Bhit i.e. the present mausoleum and village were located in the centre of these sand dunes and (probably at the site of Hujro). He would meditate there in solitude and was often witnessed by the people and thus the news spread around. Down below that Bhit (sand dunes) in southern direction was a depression of Kirar (Kirar Wari Tarai) which used to be a receptacle for the rain water. There were leafless caper bushes (kirar) around this depression and hence it was called Kirar. This location of Bhit was a favourite spot of Shah Sahib and therefore in the beginning he himself and later on with his Fakir disciples would sojourn

(2) "سید کہ بریت شریف استاد امجد تجویز کردہ است" (Lataif Latifi, Persian text, P-86). The exact birth date of Mian Ghulam Shah Kalhoro is not available yet, it has been ascertained that in 1152 AH when Nadir Shah attacked Sindh during the reign of Mian Noor Muhammad Kalhoro, he sent his son Ghulam Shah in advance in his defence at the camp of Nadir Shah. From this fact it could be surmised that Mian Ghulam Shah must have been 15-16 years old and from this it could be deduced that his mother Mai Gulla might have performed at Bhit in 1135 AH.

there during the rainy season. During this season the herdsmen would also encamp there. When Shah Sahib turned 40 years of age (1140-1142 AH) he decided to settle permanently at the habitation of Bhit. What was the original condition of this habitat and how he selected and leveled the dunes and why he constructed residences there, Sangi has provided a set of comprehensive and verifiable statements.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Sangi was informed by Wadero Abdullah that he had heard from his father Wadero Rustam who in turn had heard from his father Wadero Qalandar that this habitat originally was a mammoth sand dune surrounded by water and woodland. Qalandar had seen young Shah Latif squatting there engrossed in a state of intense meditation and deep introspection (Lataif Latifi p-144).

(2) It is now known that during his life time the exalted saint (Shah Latif) had himself combed all the nooks and corners of Bhit Sharif. Down below the Bhit there were eye-catching aquatic depressions surrounded by exquisite sylvan greenery. The locale above at the Bhit was so enchanting the remains of which are extant at present (1880-1887 AD). In the rainy season the depressions are inundated and give a captivating look (blooming trees), 'Lataif Latifi' p-78-79)

(3) After the saint (Shah) established his centre of spiritual benediction at Bhit, he would frequent the area for

(1) This is due to the fact that all the statements of Sangi in Lataif Latifi (Circa 1880-1888 AD) are based on the information from Wadero Abdullah Shoro. At one place Sangi has stated on authority that he had heard from Wadero Abdullah (age 55 years) who had heard from his father Wadero Rustam (age 90 years) who in turn had heard this from his father Wadero Qalandar Shoro. The last of the three, while grazing camels had seen Shah Latif under the trees at Bhit and offered him milk. Thereafter when Shah Latif was leveling the sand dunes of Bhit, Qalandar used to visit Shah along with his father Sahibdino (Lataif Latefi p-144-145)



excursion in the rainy season. He, however, liked the spring season and he would meditate extensively during this season. (Lataif Latifi, p-183)

- (4) Shah SLatif was the pioneer and the first person to have settled at Bhitt Sharif. Prior to this, the area was entirely uninhabited and covered with woodland. The area surrounding Bhitt Sharif was mostly inundated, grassy and often the herdsmen would use it as a grazing ground. During the rainy season the herdsmen would encamp at Bhitt. The great saint liked solitary walks so he preferred this land. As this site was a vortex of shifting sands and sand storms, he got the land leveled by refilling it with alluvial earth and thus expanded the area. This exercise and exertion was performed by the Fakirs as a mark of devotion to the master (Murshid) Lataif Latifi, p-90-91.

- (5) It is generally believed that the great saint (ShahLatif) spent most of his life time in peregrination and only at the fagend of his life he settled at Bhitt. He first of all got constructed a room (Hujro) a little below the highest peak of Bhitt. He raised a garden in front of the room and leveled the land to expand it. Later on he constructed two rooms for his family and one room for his father. He got constructed a mosque with three tombs under his supervision. The sand dunes were extensively covered with alluvial earth and the earth was brought by hundreds of Fakirs. Shah demarcated the area in the facsimile of a map, with the help of pointer of his walking stick (Asa) and allocated the future residential quarters to each Fakir according to their need and position. The Fakirs constructed their residences accordingly and the walls thereof are still extant (1880-1887 AD), Lataif Latifi, p-36.

Before the final settlement at Bhitt Shah the aforementioned work must have taken a considerable time and been completed in different phases. The first phase included when he used to come there all alone and liked the site and established his temporary residence (Takio). Sometimes he would sojourn there and during this period, this phase must have been completed i.e. the Fakirs cleared woodland, leveled the land, expanded the area by dumping considerable chunks of alluvial earth and converted it into a habitable plateau. When Shah was nearly 40 years of age he decided to settle at Bhitt. This phase of life is such, wherein every enlightened person would like to turn a new page in life. The year 1142 AH was fortieth year of Shah Latif's life and it is almost probable that the construction of residential quarters in the years 1142-1143 AD had taken place. After the construction of residential quarters at Bhitt, he and his father shifted from Kotri to Bhitt. All the residential quarters mentioned here were initially mud plastered and served as transitory shelter. However, the reference to the mosque with tombs is not credible and tenable as it was constructed subsequently. This matter will be elaborated afterwards. The first mosque constructed was actually mud plastered and properly designed and lined for congregational prayers.

#### **(b) The demise of Shah Habib:**

After the finalization of the process of permanent settlement at Bhitt and the construction of residential quarters and shifting from Kotri to Bhitt, Shah Habib became ill. Shah Latif devoted his entire attention to the treatment of affectionate father and spiritual mentor. All the Fakirs were also visibly perturbed and fervently prayed for the health and an early recuperation of the elder Shah. Shah Latif would spend most of his time inside Haveli, nursing his father and whenever he appeared the Fakirs would enquire about the



health of his father. Both the father and son were well known personages of the time, the elder one because of his piety and exemplary asceticism and the younger one because of his natural charisma. Many learned physicians visited the patient but to no avail. Shah Latif would spend the whole time looking after his father. The end came peaceably. One day Shah Habib did not respond to the solicitous words of the son and Shah Latif came out of the Haveli with a mournful face when his affectionate disciples queried about the health of his father he uttered the following rhythmical notes:

سٺي جنگ جواب نه ڏين. ڪنهن ڏاڍي ڪيف ڪڪوريا (1)

When Shah Habib breathed his last, Shah Latif buried him at Bhit where presently the grave is located. The year was 1144 AH. Shah Latif surrendered to the divine will with remarkable patience and endurance, as his father had passed away from this world with full self-actualization. An eminent scholar and writer of Thatta Mian Muhammad Sadiq Nagshbandi who became disciple of Shah Latif, appreciating

(1) This writer has heard this verserited by Shah Latif with slight variations from various Fakirs. Mir Abdul Hussain Khan Sangi's narration about this incident is quite contrary to the affectionate relationship between Shah Habib and Shah Latif. According to this tradition, during the indisposition of Shah Habib, Shah Latif was not present at Bhiti and was living at Kotri. On account of this indifference Shah Habib sent him a verse complaining of his behavior. In response thereof Shah Latif sent him a riposte but did not turn-up. The reason for this conduct of Shah Latif has been rationalized as under:

Shah Latif had decided to abide by the divine will and therefore declared: "if I go and see my father dying I will feel sorry which will be against my covenant" (vide, Lataif Latifi, Persian text, p-42-43)

the state of surrender and subjugation manifested by Shah Latif derived the date of demise of Shah Habib from an Arabic root which is indeed appropriate and invaluable from the semantic context,

"الموتُ جسرٌ يصلُ الحبيبَ للقاءِ الحبيبِ"

i.e. "the death is a bridge which connects one friend with another". (1)

Later on when Shah Latif constructed the tomb of his father, he got this historic phrase transcribed degantly over the door which is still intact.

### Ascension to the Master's stature:

Shah Abdul Latif inherited the elevated status of Murshid (Master) but like his father his attitude towards the ceremonial relationship of Master-disciple was distinctly unconventional and uncommon. Shah Habib was an outstanding patrician and highly self-actualized sage of his age. After Mioon Shah Karim he achieved considerable eminence in spirituality in the Qadria order. He commanded widespread respect and veneration amongst the masses and had a large number of disciples (Mureeds). After his demise naturally the people looked up to Shah Latif. Shah Latif had sworn allegiance to his father in the Qadri Tariqa (order) according to following sequence:

Shah Abdul Latif took over the mantle of caliphate (vice regency) from his father. Habib Shah took over from his father Abdul Quddus Shah, he from his father Jamal Shah he from his father Shah Abdul Karim, he from his father Murshid Sultan Ibrahim Bahari, he from his Murshid Syed Ahmed Qadri Hasni Hamvi (from the Syrian town Hama), he

(1) See writer's detailed article on the demise of Shah Habib, *Mehran* quarterly No. 3-4, 1987.



from his father Syed Ali Hashmi, he from his father Syed Shahabuddin Ahmed, he from his father Syed Sharfuddin Qasim, he from his father Syed Badaruddin Yahya, he from his father Syed Noordin Hussain, he from his father Syed Alauddin Ali, he from his father Syed Shamsuddin Muhammad, he from his father Syed Siafuddin Yahya, (who was the first patriarch from the descendants of Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani who had migrated from Baghdad to Hama), he from his father Syed Zaheeruddin Ahmed, he from his father Syed Shamsuddin Abu Nasr Muhammad, he from his father Qazi Syed Abu Saleh Nasr, he from his father Syed Hafiz Abu Bakar Tajuddin Abdul Razak, he from his father Shaikul Islam Hazrat Ghous-e-Azam Syed Muhiuddin Abu Muhammad Abdul Qadir Jilani who was the founder of the Qadria Tariqa (order).<sup>(1)</sup>

As Shah Latif succeeded his father and Murshid he would not deign to discontinue the sufistic order inherited from his father for the sake of consolation, commiseration, compassion and guidance of his disciples. However, he would not try to induce people to become his disciples or would like to ceremonially induct somebody as a Mureed. Those people who had joined him due to his congenial and kind companionship and benevolent fraternization or were deeply impacted by the celestial and transcendental truth imbued in his poetry would constantly congregate around his charismatic personality. These devoted followers included the

<sup>(1)</sup> Beyond Abdul Qadir Jilani, the order of sages and sufi saints reaches up to Hazrat Ali. Besides this, in the Qadri Tariqa the order of sages, saints and Masters (Murshids) reaches up to Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddique and the other companions of the Holy Prophet. In "Lataif Latif" (p-23-24) Mir Abdul Hussain Khan Sangi has extended this order up to Hazrat Ali but has omitted certain names in the first part. This part has been reproduced as written by the learned scholar of Matari Mushtaque Matalvi. Late Maulvi Din Muhammad Wafai has also copied this in "Lutf-ul-Latif" (p-31-32).

persons from all walks of life, i.e. from the stark illiterate village folks to the accomplished scholars. For example on one hand an eminent scholar of Thatta Makhdom Muhammad Sadiq became his disciple and on the other a multitude of simple, rustic, and poor Jat Balochs of Cutch became his inveterate followers. Shah Latif followed the sufistic order of his great grandfather Mioon Shah Karim. Mioon Shah Karm had donned the mantle of Qadri Tariqa in pursuance of his Master Sultan Ibrahim Bahari, but before that he had also imbibed the quintessential teachings of Suharwardi order. Following the footsteps of the Sufi Masters he was a strict follower of Jamaat Ahle Sunnah, at the same time like his Master Sultan Ibrahim, his personal predisposition was towards Awaisi sub-order. This meant like a devotee of Prophet Muhammad he had received spiritual guidance from the Holy Prophet through extra sensory perception. Shah Abdul Latif had genuine and conscious devotion to Prophet Muhammad as he was convinced that Risaalat (institution of messenger) was a prerequisite and sine-qua-non for Tauhid (Unity of Allah)

وحده لا شريك له جان تو چئين ايشن  
تان ميج محمد ڪارئي نرتون منجهان نينهن

Shah Latif believed that Abdiat (عبده ورسوله) the state of submission ultimately leads to the infinite pinnacle of humanity (نڪا ابتدا "جي نڪا انتها").

Shah Latif had extreme adoration for the Holy Prophet verging on passionate attachment. He was inspired by the high moral values, noble character and the everlasting message of Renaissance brought by the great benefactor of humanity. The Holy Prophet smashed the old idols of obscurantism and superstition and abolished slavery. Shah Latif during this sufistic phase of his life established his spiritual linkage with the Holy Prophet via Awaisi order.



Despite this Shah Latif was also installed as a Murshid (Master), according to sufistic Tariqa, he therefore initiated an innovative step which bespeaks of his superior consciousness.

The sages and saints of sufistic order and Tariqa are immune from the commonplace thinking and mindset. However, certain cogent arguments have been raised regarding the Awaisi order at the common level, e.g. can the absentee Master (Murshid) be received or not and can the deceased personage be received as a Murshid (Master). Shah Latif wrote a letter to an eminent scholar, researcher and sufi of Thatta Makhdum Muhammad Mueen to seek elucidation of these issues. Makhdum Sahib who had developed great respect and veneration for Shah Latif responded in a characteristic logical and academic manner. The text of both the letters written in Persian language later on came to be known as "Risala Awaisia". We reproduce underneath the complete text of the letter of Shah Latif and a summary of the detailed response of Makhdum Muhammad Mueen. Perusals of both the letters illustrate completely the full relevance of the subject and the objective of the historic correspondence.

#### The questions of the servants of Hazrat Shah Sahib (peace of Allah be upon him)

In the name of Allah the Beneficent and Merciful.

1. Ulema who were the centre of veneration of the common men may kindly enlighten the suppliant whether word "Awaisi" has appeared in the work of Sufi Jamaat (may Allah

be pleased with them)? If it has appeared then what is its meaning? If "Awaisi" is that person who derives spiritual benediction through extra sensory perception then in this condition receiving an apparent Master (Murshid) is not contrary to his action and belief.

منافات دارد یا ندارد ؟

2. Do the supplication for spiritual benediction is justifiable according to reason and Shariah from a person who is deceased and lying in state of limbo in purgatory?

[۲] ونیز فیض گرفتن از میت در عالم برزخ عقل و شرع آنرا تجویز نماید یا نماید ؟

3. Are not the doctrines of asceticism and self-abnegation (Sufism) not in contradiction to the dictums of scholars of Shariah?

[۳] و نیز فقر و سلوک را با اقوال علمای ظاهر منافات هست یا نه ؟

4. Can some sage or seer who is well known for his miracles and fantastic feats but is not related to Naqshbandi and Qadri order be considered as a follower of a superstitious and occult order?

[۴] ونیز یکی از کباران اولیاء الله تعالی که مشهور بخوارق عادات و کرامات باشد ، لیکن سلسلہ ارادت بتبعین مشائخ ، مثل سلسلہ نقشبندیہ و قادریہ مشہور ندارد ، طریقہ آن بزرگ راست بنیاد و بی اصل توان گفت یا نه ؟

5. I am supplicating you who are the upholders of

[۵] شما که علمای حامی دین و بیان کننده قبیح و حسن اند ، می پرسر



religion (Deen) and distinguish between the good and evil as to what is the proper and accurate elucidation of the aforementioned issues? It is beseeched that response may kindly be written in simple Persian so that it may benefit all and sundry and the benefit thereof may endure forever. May Almighty Allah be pleased to protect and pardon your sins and may reward you in the hereafter- Ameen

اجرکم ورضی عنکم امین!

The response the servants of Hazrat Makhdum (peace of Allah be upon him).

In the name of Allah the Beneficent and Merciful.

With the praise and eulogy of Allah and mercy of Allah be on the Holy Prophet and on his elevated family and on the graced companions of the Holy Prophet and after this:

1. His response to the first question is this: that the word "Awaisi" has appeared in the work of

Sufi sages and is in common use as is evident and manifest to the readers of these books of the seers and "Awaisi" is that person whose spiritual edification is underwritten by the spectral beings. This act of getting spectral benediction is not in contradiction to receiving an apparent Murshid (, Master).

2. The response of second question is: to receive benediction from the deceased is not unjustifiable from the point of view of Shariah and reason. This practice is noticeable in the biographies of great saints which have been transferred to us through reliable sources. This practice is also acknowledged by the eminent Sufis.

3. The answer of the third question is this: that following the practice of the Ulema (Scholars) who in reality follow Shariah



Muhammadi i.e. law of Muhammad, asceticism and self-abnegation are pre-requisites. Therefore there is no contradiction between doctrines of asceticism and the dictums of apparent scholars.

4. The response to the fourth question is that: that there have been thousands of sages of Allah who belong to lesser known order of Masters (Murshid). These friends of Allah spent their life in relative obscurity but they were real sages. Imam Yafae in "Rozur-ul-Rayaheen" mentioned the sages about whom he was fully informed with regard to their respective orders and Masters (Murshids). Nobody knows that who taught esoteric knowledge to Khawaja Hafiz Shirazi as mentioned in Maulana Jami's book "Nafhat-ul-Ans" that receiving an apparent Murshid is not a pre-condition for a sage (Wali) and therefore to

[۲] جواب سوال چهارم آن باشد که  
عزیزین هزار اولیاء مقربین گذشت  
اندک سلسله مشائخ ایشان شهرت  
داشت. این همه دوستان خدا  
یگنمایی در جهان و بادهای عمر بسر  
بردند مگر اولیاء نبودند. امام یافعی در  
"روض الراحین" اولیاء را نقل می کند  
آنها که داند که در کدام سلسله بودند و  
از شیخ شیرازی کسی نمیداند که از ک  
حافظ شیرازی واسطه داشته اند. خواج  
سبق علوم باطن خوانده. چنانچه در  
"نقحات" آورده است این معنی شرط  
رأیت نیست و بدین سبب طعن  
نمودن و طریق ایشان را بی اصل گفتن  
جرات و گستاخی است.

ridicule and to denigrate such orders as worthless is sheer insolence and arrogance.

Certified that Allah Almighty may protect us from sins of omission and commission and we may seek His assistance and we have trust in Him. It is expected that the readers of these pages would pray for final redemption and acquisition of true knowledge of Islam and intricacies of Shariah by this humble soul Muhammad alias Mueen son of Muhammad alias Ameen.

It appears that Shah Latif through this letter, instead of quenching his personal curiosity wanted to address the queries of his followers. He was endowed by his father with heritage of Qadria order but simultaneously he scaled the highest echelons of "Awaisi" order and thus spiritual benediction of Prophet Muhammad enriched his soul with enlightenment. From this letter it is evident that in order to guide others on the path of self-abnegation and Tariqat (ways of Masters) he initiated this commendable step which substantiates his ultimate status as a Murshid. Pursuing the text of letter and the formal sequence of questions one learns a great deal about the intellectual insight and philosophical depth of Shah Latif. His request to Makhdoom



Muhammad Mueen regarding the reply in simple Persian language indicates that Shah knew full well the difference between simple and difficult Persian text. This evidence is a cogent argument about Shah Latif's conversance and familiarity with Persian.

### **(c) Establishment of abstemious order of Fakirs and its management:**

After permanent settlement at Bhit, Shah Latif turned his attention towards the ways and means i.e. the managerial and administrative matters. Since the time of leveling of Bhit and his temporary sojourn there, he had been assigning chores amongst the Fakirs. After migration from Kotri to Bhit, Shah Latif supervised the proper managerial matters pertaining to hospitality, kitchen and housekeeping. He assigned the supervision of mosque and the congregation (Jamaat) to a group of trusted Fakirs and also appointed a special Fakir for Raag. The system of administration and management gradually improved and in the later years of his life it was in full bloom.<sup>(1)</sup>

The job description and duty distribution amongst the Fakirs was as under:

- Mai Ganga Jat, Mai Salhan Tuniani and Mai Bua Wasan were maid servants inside the Haveli.
- Abdul Wasaih Fakir Salaro, Sukhur Fakir Dero, Ismail Fakir Samo of Beeahnpur, Fakir Syed Nihal Shah, Ismail

<sup>(1)</sup> According to a narrative tradition of Mir Sangi the system of Fakirs management was established in the last ten years of his life (Lataif Latifi Persian text p-181). However, from Sangi's various other statements and other references it is confirmed that the system of Fakirs' management started right after Shah's migration to Bhit which reached culmination and full implementation in the last 5-10 years of Shah's life and during this period he had stopped peregrinations and would reside most of the time at Bhit.

Fakir Dero, Ajan Fakir Dero, Kamal Fakir Seenharo, Waroo Fakir alias Wagand, Noor Muhammad Fakir Abro of Kathri Makan, Umer Fakir Sahito, Fakir Syed Saen Dino Musepoto Matiarvi, and Bacho Fakir were special Fakirs in attendance. Umer Fakir Sahito was special servant who had looked after Shah since childhood. Shah Latif's bedding was assigned to Syed Saen Dino and Bacho Fakir was incharge of washing jug. Abdul Jameel Fakir Unnar was the keeper of prayer rug and rosary and supervised arrangements for Namaz and prayers.

Calipho Muhammad Alam Dero, the maternal cousin of Shah Sahib was incharge of Zikr and Sama (incantation and spiritual soiree).<sup>(1)</sup>

Soomar Fakir Larik was an accomplished sage who was spiritually instructed by Shah Latif to receive and guide the would be devotees. Other Fakirs held him in great esteem.<sup>(2)</sup>

- Arif Fakir Thebo of Tando Allahyar was an outstanding ascetic and used to persuade Noee Fakirs for prayers and teach them Namaz.
- Inayat Fakir Wasan acted as camel driver (Jat) and would hold the litter rope.
- Rahmoon Fakir was a cook.

<sup>(1)</sup> This means Muhammad Alam Dero "elder" who had lived earlier. In the later period Haji Muhammad Alam Dero was a singer who had learnt Raag (classical singing) first from Mioon Hussain and thereafter from Fakir Hafiz Chaki of Tando Ghulam Hyder. A pupil of the junior Muhammad Alam was Ghulam Din Aresar who was an expert in stringed musical instruments.

<sup>(2)</sup> According to a well known and generally accepted tradition Soomar Fakir Larik belonged to northern Sindh (Uttar) and was originally from Khanpur (near Shikarpur). According to Mir Sangi's writing Soomar Fakir belonged to Pir Patho seven Koh (fourteen miles) away from Khanpur.



- Qasim Fakir was a barber and would look after the hairdressing.
- Ahmed Fakir Samoo of Gahlean was a groom of Shah Sahib's horse 'Chungal'.
- Winhyoon Fakir Salarani Jat would take care of two pointer dogs 'Moti' and 'Gardgan' or 'Kheenhoon'. They were puppies when found famishing and brought home by Shah Latif. Winhyoon Fakir was their special care taker.
- Muhammad Raheem Fakir was a scribe of Shah and was in charge of correspondence. Besides there were singer Fakirs who were very near to Shah and a detailed account of them will follow.<sup>(1)</sup>

The aforementioned division and distribution of assignments and chores was indicative of Shah's innate managerial capabilities, personnel administration and endearing charismatic personality. In fact the entire system of management was based on the robust foundation of self respect. Shah Latif was always conscious about the feelings of others and ensured that no Fakir felt hurt in any respect. The Fakirs on their part were always worried about never failing performance of their duties. Due to Shah's affection and caring warmth none of the Fakirs ever shirked work. Winhyoon Fakir Salarani Jat who had recently reported for duty and was assigned the task of caring for the two dogs "Moti and Kheenhoon" was preoccupied the whole day. One day when the Fakirs sat for meals they happened to be in pairs. When food was served to Moti, the dog would not take it (because the partner Kheenhoon was somewhere else). When Shah Latif was informed he said: "Since Moti is alone

(1) In Lataif Latifi (p-169-171) Mir Abdul Hussain Sangi has given the names of Fakirs in detail. This writer has witnessed and copied on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1955 AD the transcribed details of Dhani Bux Fakir available in "Sharah Latifi" in possession of Hussain Bux Fakir Larik.

so he is not eating and he needs a partner". These words of Shah had a deep impact on Winhyoon Fakir and immediately he became a partner of Moti and started sharing food. Shah Latif extremely appreciated this gesture and expressed: "Now onwards wherever goes Winhyoon "Kutai" (caretaker), there goes Shah Bhitai". Winhyoon was later on honored and decorated with the turban of Khilafat (vice regency).

#### **(d) The order of Sama and Zikr at Bhit and establishment of institution of Raag:**

Sama is singing of devotional songs and Zikr is repeated chanting of Divine names. After settlement at Bhit, Shah Latif commenced the order of Sama and thereafter established the institution of Raag.

Devotional singing or Sama: According to the nature of Sama at Bhit and the oral traditions of Fakirs it is learnt that Shah had established the order of Sama and Zikr at Bhit Shah in continuation of the same order in practice at the mausoleum of Mioon Shah Karim. Sama was practiced and performed at night. Every first Monday of each month of the Islamic calendar and the night of Hajj were fixed for Sama. Sama was also performed on Friday and Eid days after prayers. During the times of Shah Karim the practice of Sama started during the winter season as there was less of farming activity and more of leisure time. During the winter season for the sake of warmth and light, a bonfire would be lit around which the Fakirs would perform Sama during the night. This would include loud rhythmical recitation of Ahyat (verses), chanting and incantation of divine names (Zikr). In the same season the practice of Sama and Zikr commenced at Bhit, this was headed by the maternal cousin of Shah Latif and chief calipho Muhammad Alam Dero. Calipho Muhammad Alam would light bonfire, in the north of which



calipho and his companions and in the south of Tamar Fakir and his companions would stand. Thereafter would stand Shah Latif. The first three rosaries of "Hoo Allow" (هو الله) would be repeated. Thereafter a Fakir from the group of calipho Muhammad Alam would recite from the Sur Bilawal or Dhanasri and after reciting the first line calipho Muhammad Alam would impart a Zarb (a loud resonant vibrating sound) from "الزارجة بالزارجة" (words from a Quranic Surah). After that Tamar Fakir's group would also recite the same line and would give two Zarbs (loud resonant vibrating sounds). At the same time the Fakirs would slowly rotate around the bonfire step by step ensuring that the whole Sama was finished within one and quarter round. In the end all would sit in the western direction and would perform Zikr and this included rhythmical recitation of Abyat.<sup>(1)</sup> The proceedings would invariably end with prayers.

It cannot be stated with certitude as to when the order of Sama started at Bhit and what Abyat were recited. The names of the poets are also not known. It is quite probable that initially Abyat of Mioon Shah Karim and other sages might have been recited. But subsequently the verses of Shah were recited in the Sama. It is also not known what other verses and Surs were recited besides Bilawal and Dhanasari. However, at present the following verses from the Surs are being recited and it is possible that during the time of Shah Latif verses from these same Surs might have been recited, which are in practice now.

#### **First round (whole):**

- First quarter segment of the first round recitation from Sur Bilawal- Six to eight Abyat.

<sup>(1)</sup> This was the Zikr of Sama. In addition to this after each prayer daily Tasbih Zikr (incantation on rosary) was also held separately.

- Second segment of the round, Sur Sari Raag- Six to eight Abyat.
- Third segment of the round, Sur Samondi- Six to eight Abyat.
- In the last quarter segment of the round, Sur Sorath- Six to eight Abyat.

#### **Second round (quarter segment)**

- The first quarter segment of the second round Sur Rano and Sur Hussaini-six to eight Abyat.
- Total one quarter round = Total six Surs.

Presently on the eve of Eid after prayers only, verses from three Surs i.e. Bilawal, Rano and Hussaini are recited in the Sama.<sup>(1)</sup>

**Institution of Raag:** The order of Sama included rhythmical recitation of Abyat loud and magniloquent incantation in chorus, intermittent emanation of shrill resonant and vibrating sounds (Zarbs) and rotation in circle. These steps later on became an essential ingredient in the evolution of the institution of Raag and were considered prerequisite components in the learning of classical sufistic Fakir School of singing introduced by Shah Abdul Latif. In 1142 AH when Shah Latif settled at Bhit, the Fakirs also followed him, some of whom became practitioners of Raag because of their inherent love for it and started performing. Mir Abdul Hussain Sangi in "Lataif Latifi" has pointed out that it was sheer love for Raag which made Shah Latif settle at Bhit. Before that he was sauntering from place to place due to

<sup>(1)</sup> After the demise of Bhitai Sahib Sama was held on 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Safar. In Sama on 16<sup>th</sup> Safar, verses from three Surs i.e. Bilawal, Rano and Hussaini are recited. In Sama on 14<sup>th</sup> Safar verses from four Surs i.e. Porab, Kamod, Karayal and Hussaini are recited.



incessant zeal and zest for peregrination. The melodious and mellifluous harmony of Raag quenched his insatiable thirst for music and he finally settled at Bhit.<sup>(1)</sup> In the beginning the Fakirs would sing the Abyat and Wais of Shah Latif during the leisure hours but subsequently with inspiration from Shah their interest in Raag grew exponentially and it became the food for their soul. Following the death of Shah Habib in 1144 AH singer Fakirs were in a state of depression and despondency, "Lataif Latifi" has related the following incident to illustrate Fakirs condition.<sup>(2)</sup>

Amongst the Raagis (classical singers of Latif's Raag) a large number of them developed an intermittent (malarial) fever. They complained to Shah Latif of their recurring uneasiness, physical agony and anguish which were apparently the symptoms of their malaise. Shah Latif counseled them: "hold a recital of Latifi Raag on every Thursday evening at the tomb of father (Shah Habib) and you will get well soon." The Fakirs followed this advice and lo and behold recovered before long. They commenced singing after the first quarter of the night and terminated their recital before the break of dawn. However, after some days they deferred their recitals and relapsed into intermittent fever and from then onwards they vowed to stick to a regular regimen

(1) رازان رنگ انس به سوره گرینند بکمان شریف ماندن اختیار کردن و ذوق و شوق ما فریق به آن می داشتند و از آن جوش تسکین یافتند. "لا اله الا الله" به مدایم بحمل گردی مصروف بودند بمروج پسر می بودند. و سوره برای حصول ثواب سببی شد. this writer. (Lataif Latifi Persian, text revised by Shah Abdul Latif Bhit Shah Cultural Committee, Bhit Shah 1967 AD, p-1010)

(2) متغول است که اکثر نقراء لطیفی که بودند تب نوبت کردند. چنین از ملاقات و ناهماری طبع عاجز آمدند شکایت از بی اعتدالی طبیعت بحضرت الیاء عرض گذاریدند. فرمان صدور یاقوت که هر شب آید به درگاه پدر بزرگوار سوره لطیفی برسانید و کلام شریف بگویند. نقراء عمل برحکم کردند صحت کلی یافتند. بعد از یک باس شب آغاز سوره می کردند و یاقوت صبح صادق انجام می نمودند. و چون مدتی متغولی شد در گذرد سوره کاهلی و تساهلی نمودند. باز به علت تب گرفتار آمدند. لابد مداریت ساخته که تاخیر شب جمعه کلام کرامت نظام می رسانید الطائف لطیفی. ص-۱۰۸

of recital on every Thursday night. This uninterrupted practice continues till today.

From the foregoing incident it is evident that the Fakirs were counseled to hold recital before the tomb of Shah Habib just after the demise of the saint. They started recital but not regularly and gradually thereafter they followed a sustained and steady regimen. From this observation it follows that slightly after the year 1144 AH, i.e. the date of demise of Shah Habib, within a couple of months the schedule for Thursday night Raag was proclaimed and the Raagai Fakirs were issued specific instructions and in its pursuance recital was held without fail on every Thursday night wherein the Fakirs would sing the Abyat and Wais of Shah Latif according to divergent and disparate Surs. Consequently "Shah Jo Raag" (the classical recital of Shah's poetry) as an institution was established in 1144 AH (1). Under the personal supervision and guidance of Shah Latif following system of classification was devised.

1. The soul stirring and pathos inducing classical Raag of invigorating and exhilarating aesthetic joy was categorized subject wise from the repertoire of Shah's poetry according to various Surs and Abyat. Different Surs (Raags) were selected for the recital and following their quintessential principles, Shah's Raag was presented according to divergent musical modes.
2. A new musical instrument called "Damboro" was used for the first time. It was got prepared by Shah Latif under his own supervision at Thatta.
3. Time schedule was fixed for singing of Raags and full compliance thereof was strictly ensured. Accordingly after the Isha prayers, congregation, the recital commenced and ended before the Fajr prayers with a devotional supplication marking the finale.



4. Fakirs were selected for Raag and Tamar Fakir was selected as the maestro of the recital.

Consequently Shah Jo Raag (Shah's musical recital) was consecrated as an organized entity which envisaged a regular recital on every Thursday night and on the eve of Eid and Hajj. This entire arrangement was not a formalized procedural ceremony but it had become a food of soul for Shah Sahib at this juncture of life (and probably even before that). Till next sixteen years (1145-1161 AH) whenever Shah Sahib went out on travels he would have the classical Raag singers as his constant companions and during the journeys the recital would be held every night without fail. The overwhelming spell of this invigorating and vitalizing Raag on the great poet was such that whenever and wherever Shah Latif had meeting and discourse with Shariah scholars of the age they would empathically understand the spiritual predicament of the Sufi poet and music aesthete. The last recital of Shah's Raag during the travels was held in 1161 AH at the town of Thatta. During the course of performance the higher potency and power of spiritually elevating poetry and melody, (imbued with divine longing and pathos for the Beloved Allah) was such that Makhdam Muhammad Mueen breathed his last in a state of trance during the Sama.

#### (c) Maintenance and repairs of the tombs of the elders:

Shah Latif was figuratively and literally a man of ecstasy (حَال). His thoughts always verged on the infinite and limitless future in pursuit of high moral character and caliber and spiritual excellence. He persisted in search for the Absolute truth and had an enduring longing for reunion with the Creator. At the same time the past tense meant an important, significant and revealing lesson for the future moral edification. He considered it as a mirror of individual character and ethical probity besides being anchor of virtuous

behavior, social and moral rectitude. Respect for the elders and profound regard for human values, customs, traditions and mores is an inalienable characteristic of Sindhi culture and this was thought of highly by him. Shah's own moral upbringing was carried out by his elders and now when he reached the finale of ethical virtue and character as a gesture of gratitude he turned towards the heritage of his ancestors by repairing, maintaining and constructing their tombs and graves.

To begin with, the mausoleum of Shah Karim at Bulri attracted his attention as Shah Latif's father Shah Habib, grandfather Abdul Qudus Shah, great grandfather Jalal Shah (Jamal Shah) were born there. Abdul Qudus Shah died there and was buried near the grave of Mioon Shah Karim. Besides the bondage of relationship, Shah Latif had an unbreakable spiritual affinity with great grandfather Shah Karim and had religiously imbibed his moral edification and counsels. He would always keep "Bayan-ul-Arfeen" during his innumerable peregrinations. Likewise as Shah Karim had settled at the new abode of Bulri, similarly Shah Latif settled at the dwelling of Bhit. Comparatively when Shah Latif established the order of Sama and Zikr at Bhit and on the analogy of some Abyat of Shah Karim, completed verses himself when some Fakirs could not remember a missing line of the verses of Mioon Shah Karim. He would complete it impromptu as if it were an original composition of his grandfather.<sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> According to the traditions of devotees Shah Karim had composed the first line of some verses. When some Fakirs enquired about rest of the lines, he replied that some day an enlightened soul would be born in his progeny who would complete these verses.



For example some Fakirs told him that Mioon Shah Karim has composed a line (but its succeeding line was missing). The first line was:

تري پڳي ڪنگري لڏيا ٿيرا ڏي

Shah Latif promptly came out with a repartee:

آئي نڪي ني، پروجي سلهاڙي ساڻ سان

These traditions are an unmistakable evidence of the fact that Shah Latif had a profound affection and deep regard for Shah Karim. During the childhood he went there along with his father and in his youth frequented Bulri on his own. At the later age he would pay an enduring homage to the Karimi mausoleum in the company of his Fakirs. He joined in the practice of Sama and Zikr there besides establishing the order of Raag at Bhit. Karimi Fakirs imbibed Shah Jo Raag (classical Raag of Shah) and thus after Bhit it was the mausoleum of Shah Karim which started the tradition and practice of Shah Jo Raag which persists till to date.

After ten-twelve years' sustained attendance to pay homage to his venerable ancestor, at this juncture of life, Shah decided to construct a mausoleum on the grave of Mioon Shah Karim with a new mosque nearby. During the period of 1154-1156 AH he finished his work with great dedication and devotion. A beautiful mausoleum and a graceful mosque on the northern side were constructed for Mioon Shah Karim. Nearby in the south-east direction a mausoleum on the grave of his grandfather Abdul Qudus Shah was also constructed. He decorated the mausoleum and mosque of Shah Karim with Kashi tiles brought from Multan and also arranged some masons from there to work and bake more tiles at Bulri. The entire work was completed in 1156 AH and on the direction of Shah one of his devotees and disciples and a renowned scholar of Thatta Makhdom

Muhammad Sadiq Naqshbandi extracted the date of completion of Karimi mausoleum from this exquisite phrase:

”هست درگاه کربمي جلوه گاه حق ابد“

From the numerical calculation = 1156 AH

Shah Latif got this historic phrase inscribed in a beautiful calligraphic tile in blue ink and installed it on the mausoleum.<sup>(1)</sup> Another small brick inscribed with word Latif was installed on the front door of the mausoleum on the northern side. In this period the spiritual seat (Gadi) was under the control of Abdul Wasiah Shah (son of Abdul Ghani Shah Son of Muhammad Dalil Shah son of Din Muhammad Shah son of Mioon Shah Karim) whose attention was rather more towards the mundane matters than the management of mausoleum. He became apprehensive that since Abdul Latif Shah had installed his name's tile after the construction of Dargah (mausoleum), the latter's intentions were to become an inheritor and the occupier of the mausoleum. Soon after the departure of Shah Latif, he got the brick "bearing the letters Latif" removed from there. By this time Shah Latif had left Bulri and had reached the town Dundhee (between Bulri and Tando Muhammad Khan) and was the guest of Syed Muhammad Salah (son of Abu Bakar Shah Son of Muhammad Sharif Shah Son of Muhammad Dalil Shah son of Din Muhammad Shah son of Mioon Shah Karim). When the news of brick extraction reached Shah Latif he expressed: "This poor soul is named

(1) In 1355 AH when Sajjada Nashin (spiritual head) Ghulam Hyder Shah with the help of Fakirs of Laung Fakir Mahesar constructed the mausoleum then original epitaph bricks were got removed and an epitaph was inscribed over other bricks and installed there. Only one brick from amongst these indicating the chronological date and saved by the caretakers was shown to this writer by the chief caretaker Soof Fakir.



Abdul Latif. However, "Latif" is one of the names of Allah Almighty. May it not provoke Allah's wrath" <sup>(1)</sup>

After the repairs and construction of Karimi mausoleum Shah turned his attention towards the buildings at Bhit. As these had been constructed in haste, now these were reconstructed with a better planning. After constructing the graves of his great grandfather Shah Karim and grandfather Abdul Qudus Shah, Shah Latif reconstructed the mausoleum of his father with pucca(fire baked) bricks and inscribed the phrase indicating the date of demise over the outer door, composed by his devotee and a pious scholar Makhdum Muhammad Sadiq Naqshbandi Thatvi.

“الموت جسرہ یوصل الحبيب للقاء الحبيب”

(The death is bridge which unites two friends).

According to the numerological calculation the digit=1144.

<sup>(1)</sup> Mir Abdul Hussain Khan has narrated the incident in "Lataif Latifi" (p-32-34) and has also mentioned that brick: "روضہ کریمی یا مر لطیفی پدیوار نصب کردند کہ بران لطیف نگاشت بود" indicated that the brick was installed on which wall. However, he mentions subsequently that another brick in yellow color was installed by Sahib Dino Shah exactly at the place from where the brick was extracted. If Sahib Dino Shah had installed some bricks then same would have been replaced or removed when Ghulam Hyder Shah with the help of Fakirs of Laung Fakir carried out repair and something new was affixed outside the eastern wall. This writer has minutely examined the mausoleum and the walls of the mosque on the northern side and has not detected any brick. However, the caretaker Haji Soof Memon informed that his elders used to say that the original brick inscribed with "Latif" was installed outside the eastern wall, in the north of mausoleum's door and in the far northern periphery adjacent to the corner. The southern wall of the mosque is near this corner.

The mosque was katcha (sun baked) constructed since the beginning; therefore Shah Latif got it reconstructed on grand scale in the later part of his life. <sup>(1)</sup>

#### (f) Visitations to the devotees and disciples and meetings with spiritually exalted and sublime saints and Fakirs:

It has been narrated previously that about twenty-twenty two years of Shah's life (1120-1142 AH), was a period of quest and pursuit of divine truth which took him on arduous peregrination inside and outside of Sindh. He visited the hearths and homes, abodes and haunts of sages, seers and saints. He also met people of various vocations in all walks of life in different parts of Sindh and learnt intimately about the ins and outs of their trades and skills. These peregrinations were of course meant to be for self education and acquisition of first-hand observation and experimentation. In the second period of his life which was past forty years of age Shah Latif became weather beaten Sufi Dervish and a self-actualized

<sup>(1)</sup> Mir Abdul Hussain Khan Sangi's entire statement has an anecdotal flavor which is obviously intended to describe a miracle of Shah Latif. According to his description Mioon Shah Karim did not approve of a mausoleum over his grave and whenever any person would cut the tree near the grave to construct a building, he would invariably be harmed. Shah did not receive any harm. Due to Abdul Wasiah Shah's unbecoming conduct and Shah Latif's annoyance, after three generations his descendants lost the succession of the Gadi (chieftaincy) and progeny of Muhammad Salah Shah took over (Lataif Latifi, p-30-33). Mir Sangi has described that place inside the building where a brick inscribed "Latif's" name was affixed but he has not mentioned the brick of Karimi mausoleum. It is apparent from the meaning of inscription on the brick that it was a brick inscription installed inside the mausoleum. Now a new epitaph (inscription) has been affixed which has been rewritten. During initial research in 1968 and again in September 1987, this writer witnessed that brick and took photograph of it. The caretaker of mausoleum Haji Soof Memon has preserved the brick. This brick is a great memorabilia of Shah Abdul Latif and needs to be preserved with extra ordinary care.



person. During this period his journeys were more thought-out and planned: he would visit his devotees and disciples to look after their health and welfare and would like to have more frequent enlightened discourses with the accomplished and acclaimed Sufis, saints and sages of exalted status and ecstatic poise. During these peregrinations Shah would keep Holy Quran for daily recital and Bayan-ul-Arfeen (Malfuzat) of Maulana Rumi for his moral edification and counseling of the audience. His devoted follower Miron Muhammad Salahi would always accompany him and during the day time before Zuhr prayers and after the Friday prayers would recite Masnavi with exegesis and interpretation. Besides the classical singer (Raagai) Fakir would invariably accompany Shah Latif and after the Isha prayers would render Shah Ja Raag. Speculations are often made about the peregrinations of Shah Latif without substantive conclusive evidence. There is no doubt Shah Latif indeed made frequent visitations inside and outside of Sindh in the earlier and latter period of his life. But there is no correct or exact information about the earlier phase of peregrinations. However, comparatively more authentic and credible evidence is traceable about his visitations and meetings in the last phase of his life.<sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> For example in Mir Abdul Hussain Khan Sangi's *Lataif Latifi* (p-183) an unfounded statement has been delivered that "Hazrat saint Latif spent three years in the company of ascetics and Jogis and went on the journey of Kohistan." Which were these three years of his life and who counted these three years?

<sup>(2)</sup> The account of some of these journeys and discourses are in writing and other are well known through oral traditions. Further authentication of the oral traditions has been made by this writer himself by visiting those habitations and by conducting on the spot detailed verification and critically evaluating the minute details from the learned living personalities and their progeny whose forefathers had been mentioned in the foregoing anecdotes.

During this period, the circle of his devotees had increased manifold which included the common folks and mobility. He urged action rather than blind belief and preferred spirit to mere ritual. In consonance with the prime doctrine of unity of Allah, exhorted a firm faith in the Creator of the universe and urged absolute trust in Him, with an eternal love of mankind and espousal of higher moral values and cultivating a sterling character. Owing to Shah's character par excellence and affectionate manners and conduct, the men of authority and some prominent Hindu mystics became his adherents and votaries.

During this prolonged period of about twenty years Shah Latif must have visited many habitats and wherever he protracted his stay, the abodes were named after him and were called "Takia" (place of rest). Presently in Sindh there are many "Takias" of Shah at various places, some of which were established later and named after him by his devotees. However, about a few of these can be considered genuine and it can be stated with certainty that Shah did really visit them. For example there are Shah Ja Takias at Waghian Ji Bhit in Taluka Khipro,<sup>(1)</sup> in Thatta near Makli, Badin, Rohri, Bakhar (old) and Tarai (two miles north-west of Madeji).

These Takias are substantively confirmed as most probably Shah Latif himself visited these Takias and stayed there.<sup>(2)</sup> From these famous Takias at different places a safe conclusion can be drawn that Shah made visitations to his devotees from the lower to upper Sindh.

<sup>(1)</sup> There are the dunes called "dunes of Wagheon" situated there. The eastern dune is called Bhittai Jo Takio and western one has a grave of a Dervish named Bahram Fakir Junejo a devotee of Makhdum Sahib. This dune is called "Bahram Bari".

<sup>(2)</sup> There are also traditions regarding other habitats which need further enquiry.



In this period outside Sindh, Shah frequently visited his devoted Jat Baloch Fakirs in Kutch. The seeds of attachment and endearment in Kutch were sown by Winhyoon Fakir Salarani and Tamachi Fakir Nohrio. In the first phase of his peregrination Shah so much blessed both the Fakirs that they faithfully followed him to Bhit. Tamachi Fakir was directed by Latif to return to Kutch and he remained there. However, a little before his demise, Shah called him back at Bhit. Winhyoon Fakir was made to stay at Bhit and appointed the chief calipho because of his immense devotion. As a consequence many more persons became devotees of Shah Latif in Kutch and Wagar side.<sup>(1)</sup> The series of peregrinations towards Kutch among the Jat Fakirs were owing to gradually growing number of devotees under the influence of Winhyoon Fakir and wherever Shah paid visits these habitations were extremely honored. Subsequently under the personal supervision of Tamar Fakir these habitats became centres of Shah Jo Raag. In can be asserted with reasonable certainty that according to famous traditions Shah Latif visited the following habitats:

- Dar Makan, adjacent to Lakhpat town. Here Shah Latif visited Salar Fakir.
- Bhutao Makan, adjacent to "Pipr" town (Taluka Lakhpat). Dervish Sanwali Jat's grave was situated there.
- Assalri Makan, Taluka Lakhpat.

<sup>(1)</sup> From amongst the descendants of Winhyoon Fakir Salarani, Ahmed Fakir, Gul Muhammad Fakir and Tayab Fakir migrated to Sindh from Thar after Pakistan and were well conversant with Shah Jo Risalo and Sufi sages. In a meeting at Jaongi near Chuhar Jamali on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1962 in a detailed discussion with this writer they consensually confirmed this. On the request this writer Gul Muhammad Fakir handed over a turban of Qadria order bequeathed to him by Winhyoon Fakir and preserved by his progeny. This turban is now preserved in Bhit Shah Cultural Centre Museum.

- Kando Makan (Taluka Khahar). This was the original village of Winhyoon Fakir.
- Oreearo Makan (Taluka Nakhtrano). This was the village of Mioon Tamachi Fakir Nohrio.
- Jarhot Makan, near Naktrani town where Shah's calipho Saleh Fakir Mangrio resided.
- Siraro Makan (Taluka Khahoro). Shah Latif's calipho Chhato Fakir Lakhani Jat resided there.
- Bhagrio Makan (Banee), where the Jiandani Jat Fakirs, the special devotees of Shah Karim used to reside.
- Aral Makan (Taluka Makhtrano), where Shah Latif's calipho Din Muhammad Fakir lived. Originally he was Rabari and was converted to Islam by Shah. He was honored with a turban and made a Calipho.

The names of aforementioned habitats are well known and notable which were frequented by Shah Latif many a time. According to another tradition in circulation by Salarani Jat Fakirs Shah went beyond Waghar to the eastern side which was inhabited by Jats and resided there for about forty days. In memoriam a bonfire and fair (Melo) were held. (And according to other traditions Bhittai went as far as Bhujji and the Rai of Kutch the local chief also called on him). Besides Kutch Shah undertook other tours beyond Sindh in this period including visits to Baharmer and Jaisalmer where he had devotees of Sama, Sameja, Mangria, Lunja, Bhanbhra and Dal caste. The Raja of Jaisalmer also met him and was extremely impressed by Shah Latif's personality and after his demise sent a set of drums to the mausoleum as a tribute to the great poet. Shah Latif had gone there for the first time probably on the invitation of the Fakirs of Ghausi Jamaat and later on visited those habitats and stayed there and after his departure (till the recent times in 1930 AD) Shah's Raag was



held there.<sup>(1)</sup> During the peregrinations outside Sindh towards Kutch and Jaisalmer, Shah happened to come across certain self-actualized and spiritually potent Naag Panthi Yogis and some Hindu Sadhus and saints. He held protracted deliberations with them in the perspective of Taulhid (unity of Godhead). Shah Latif had already reflected deeply on the reality and verity of religious experience and he was the firm believer in the spirit of "faith" instead of rituals and ceremonial worship and adulation. Like all the saints and sages of exalted consciousness, perception, serenity and self-assurance, Shah Latif detested from the core of his heart sham, hypocrisy and self-righteousness. He strongly upheld truthfulness of belief, courage of conviction, piety of purpose and had a boundless love for the humankind.

”منهن پر مسلمان، اندر آد آهيئن“

(they appear to be Muslims outwardly but from within are idol worshippers). When he looked at the ostentations and

(1) He went to the village of Samas and Rahmun Fakirs in the south of Talwaro station beyond Baharmer. It was the centre of Sama and devotional supplications and where a regular fair in the bed of river Loni was held in winter season (month of Chet). A calipho of Ghaus named Jumo Fakir Shidi used to hold Raag in latter period at his village "Surhhar" (Taluka and District Baharmer). At village Sanioon, Burhan Jo Tar the Lunja Fakir Dals would hold Raag on tambourine in village "Seenhar", Hameer Fakir Rahmun of Rahmoon caste of Ghausia Jamaat would hold Raag. Daim Fakir and Yamin Fakir of Rahmoon caste of village "Harparbo" would also hold Raag on tambourine. Banbhra Dal Fakirs of villages "Pasarlo" and "Seenhari" held Raags regularly. This writer has personally enquired and ascertained about the habitats from many well informed persons who had visited these places or lived there. On November 4, 1980 at village Sajan Khaskheli in Nagar Parker this writer held a detailed meeting with late Hote Samo who was a well versed folk lorist and experienced traveler and had recently migrated from India. He informed and confirmed with authority about the traditions of Bhitai Sahib's visits to most of the aforementioned habitats.

apparent ceremonial ritualistic liturgies of Hindu religion and compared them with the odious performance of the selfish and self-centered devotees, he expressed with contempt:

”هندو هڏو نه آهيئن، جيتو تونو جيڳا،“

Shah Latif was an indefatigable seeker of truth and verity and in all phases of his life he was a keen observer of the nature of Universe. He assiduously explored the intricacies of relationship between the Creator and the creation, delved into variations and vicissitudes of human faith and character, from the meanest point to the highest moral altitude. At this stage in his life when he conquered his own-self and discovered self-cognition (Marfat) he realized that the unity of mankind and Universe lied in the basic ideology of Unitarianism.

Now he started meetings with sages, sufis and saints to explore and discover mysteries of Unitarianism.<sup>(1)</sup> During one of Shah's peregrinations towards Baharmer, Jaisalmer he came across a group of Hatt-Yogis coming from Porab (eastern part of India) who were Unitarians (believers in unity of Godhead). They were ascetics and practiced self-abnegation in search of Absolute Truth. The basic premise of their rigorous renunciation of worldly pleasures and long

(1) The earlier writers and researchers looking superficially at the names and nomenclatures of the Yogis and ascetics in Sur Ramkali of Shah Jo Risalo have concocted and fabricated many fictional stories about Shah's association with Yogis and ascetics. Beginning with Mir Abdul Hussain Khan Sangi's "Lataif Latifi" (p. 31-56 and 183) and then in Leelaram and Mirza Kalich Beg, whatever has been mentioned suffers from great defects. On the one side there are exaggerations about Shah's miracles and on the other there is denigration of Yogis instead of appreciation. On the whole the only conclusion drawn from these statements is that neither Shah was impressed by the set of beliefs and ritualistic rignmarole of the ascetic Yogis nor they were sincere to Shah Latif.



arduous wanderings in the wilderness was to preach unity of the Creator (Tauhid). According to certain celebrated traditions Shah Latif visited a habitat (in the precinct of Walhoti) beyond Baharmer, where a Unitarian Sadhu Mali-Nath became his devotee and thereafter in a commemoration a joint Muslim Hindu fair was instituted. In Cutch Shah continued his persistent quest for the system of dogma and enquired about the doctrines of the faith from the pundits of Kote Sar and Narain Sar temples, ascetic Yogis (a cult called "Kanphar Kapris", torn eared mendicants, who lived in the asylum called "Marhies"). He often held very intimate, endearing and engaging conversations with them on the subject of unity of Allah and Unitarianism. Shah Latif also stayed in a mosque adjacent to Kote Sar temple where a rosary in still hanging as his memorabilia. Besides Shah Latif brought "Hanj-Karioon" (elongated neck flasks) which are still kept there as keepsake. He went to Kote Sar temple where he preached the message of righteousness and Unitarianism to the pundits and left a positive impact on them. After Shah's departure, the wall of the temple against which he reclined an indelible impression emerged showing the outlines of Shah Latif's backside and this has been preserved by the pundits.<sup>(1)</sup> Once he saw a mendicant of "Dhenodhar" mountain asylum who was holding aloft his arm in penance and renunciation. Shah Latif accosted him and asked about this phenomenon. The yogi replied "I will hold aloft my arm till it withers away". Shah Latif recited the following verses to admonish him:

(1) Salarani Jat Fakirs who had witnessed these remnants of Shah Latif before Paksitan and from amongst them more than one person certified those relics to this writer. The Pandits of those temples had also falsely spread the rumour that Shah had dived in Narain Sar and resurfaced at the temple of Kote Sar.

هنين نہ سڪائي هوت لئي تہ سڪائين ٻانهون  
ڏيکارين تہ ڏيھ کي ڏتا ڪيو ڏانهون  
ديسي آئون ٻانهي مُنهي پاڻ کي . چوڻ آ  
ايءَ پنڌ پراھون. ڪي ڪي لھندا ڪاري (1)

The Sur Ramkali of Shah Jo Risalo is reminiscent of that period of peregrinations and observations when Shah Latif counseled Nath Panthi Unitarian Yogis, ascetic mendicants and torn eared vagrants and subtly preached Unity of God in a very effective, persuasive and allusive manner. In this Sur he has waxed lyrical about those persons who are adherents of Unitarianism. He effusively eulogizes truth and verity and condemns sham and hypocrisy.

گندي ۽ گراه ، جن سنا سين سانديو  
اني کان الله ، اڃا آگاهون ٿو.

#### (g) Discourses with scholars and sufi mystics of Sindh:

In order to rediscover his inner self and undergo the intricate process of self education and learning, observation and experimentation of realities of life, Shah Latif made numerous visitation to the abodes, hearths and homes of eminent sages, seers, saints and mystics of Sindh. He also had repeated meetings and discourses with scholars and self-actualized personages of standing. The two well known persons about whom it can be said with definite evidence are: Mioon Shah Inat Rizvi and Mioon Sabir Walhari. Syed Inayatullah alias Mioon Shah Inat was from Rizvi Syeds of Nasarpur and was a follower of Shah Khairuddin Qadri of Sukkur in sufistic Tariqa. He was an eminent poet of Sindh in

(1) Second reading:

ايءَ پنڌ آگاهون ، ڪي ڪامي رسنا ڪاري.  
ايءَ پنڌ آگاهون ، جت نانگا گڏا ناٿ ڪي.



his time and Shah Latif was his admirer and a personal enthusiast of his poetry since his youth. The villages of Shahpur and Nasarpur which were residential abodes of Mioon Shah Inat were not far away from Kotri. Approximately from 1120 AH to 1133 AH, the year of demise of Shah Inat, for a period of twelve, thirteen years Shah Latif had had prolonged discourses with Shah Inat.<sup>(1)</sup> Mioon Sabir Walhari was an eminent scholar and a pious sage of his age. He was from "Burand" sub-clan of Samo tribe and established an educational institution in "Pargano Walhar" (south-east of Tando Allahyar). This institution gained fame during the period of Talpur Ameer. Mioon Sabir was an outstanding teacher of Holy Quran and a self-actualized person and Shah Latif called on him out of abiding reverence and adoration. Mioon Sabir died in 1135 AH and Makhдум Pir Muhammad Halai has extracted his year of death from the phrase "صد باغ بدل". As it is a confirmed historic year, Shah Latif must have met him in 1135 AH or before that.<sup>(2)</sup>

After settlement at Bhit, in the second phase of his life after the age of forty, Shah held meetings with the following esteemed and illustrious saints, sages, savants and academicians of Sindh. These meetings have been ascertained on the basis of references and allusions from books and

<sup>(1)</sup> For reading of further relationship between Shah Inat and Shah Latif see book "Mioon Shah Inat Jo Kalaam" published in 1963, preface page -p-89-106, specially pages 89 to 90 and 96 and 10. Since the publication of the book and the preface therein the date of demise of Mioon Shah Inat (1133 AH) has finally been confirmed

<sup>(2)</sup> Mioon Sabir has been mentioned in "Tufatul Kiram" (volume-3, published by Nasri Delhi, p-166). For his meeting with Shah Latif, see "Lataif Latifi" (p-162), Lutful Latif (p-88) and Tazkara Mashaheer-i-Sindh, volume-3, p-p,265-267.

writings, credible traditions and statements of descendants, relatives and other persons concerned located at their places of residence.

Akhund Haji Mateenuddin Sanwani of old Hala, who was given ochre colored apparel by Shah Latif which was preserved by his descendants. It was in the safe custody of Sangi till 1880-1887 AD (Lataif Latifi, p-151). Syed Shahmeer Shah Bakalpoto Matiari (demise tenth Mohram 1177 AH) was a devoted student of Makhдум Muhammad Hashim and was engaged in dissemination of religious education. He has been mentioned in "Tufatul Kiram". Shah Latif was very intimate with him and once frankly asked him not to convert a particular Hindu to Islam.

Makhдум Abdul Basit Halai was an eminent scholar and a devotee of Shah Latif. Shah would come and often stay with him (Lataif Latifi, p-152; Lutful Latif, p-166). Hafiz Mioon Ishaq Dars Mashaikhphoto alias Mioon Ishaq Banori, was a teacher at a place one mile south of Mioon Mashaikh Hoti, present village "Mulko Daro" (Taluka Tando Allahyar). He was a religious scholar and a pious person and would teach students with great devotion. One day Shah Latif visited and asked him facetiously: "are you teaching or pampering them"! Hafiz Ishaq replied in the same vein: "even if they are pampered they will become Latif". (Literally this means even if they do not become pedants, they will surely turn into men of culture, which is the literal meaning of word Latif). Shah Sahib appreciated the pun and complimented him. Shah Latif thereafter would visit him frequently (a celebrated local tradition of Mashaikh Hoti and Mulko Daro).

Mioon Muhammad Mubin Tharai was a contemporary and friend of Makhдум Muhammad Hashim. He was a



well known scholar and founder of Chotiarioon Darsghah (school), District Sanghar. This school became a centre of excellence during the Talpur period. Once Shah Latif visited him during the rainy season and had a lunch with him.\* At moment of delayed departure, Mioon Mubin requested him to stay back as it was drizzling:

"جھڑا آھی ترسی پھر"

Shah Sahib replied:

"دء جا رضا جي سا اوچڻ آديسين"

and then bade farewell. (This a celebrated tradition and stands confirmed as this line is present in a verse of Sur Ramkali of the Risalo).

Makhdum Din Muhammad Siddiqi Suharwardi Siwastani (1192-1193 AH) was originally from Paat, settled at Sehwan. He had very intimate friendly relations with Shah Latif and both exchanged turbans (a token of friendship). Makhdum Sahib was an outstanding scholar of Islamic Fiqh and Hadith as well as a self-actualized Sufi saint and seer (Tazkara-Mashaikh-i-Sindh, volume-1, p-86 and 203).

Mioon Muhammad Salah was son of Mioon Muhammad Arif (of Dasori – Tando Qaiser and later settled at Matiari). He was a distinguished scholar of Persian and a foremost teacher of Masnavi of Maulana

\* This meeting probably took place in the last years (1155-1160 AH) of this period when Makhdum Abdul Rahim Ghori was a student at that time at Chotiarioon and used to call Mioon Muhammad Mubin father. Perhaps he was present during the lunch hours and he preserved the tumbler used by Shah Latif for drinking water. (According to another tradition this tumbler was presented to him by Shah on this occasion or some other time). This tumbler was preserved by the Syeds at Ghrore till recent time. (Lutful Latif, p-9).

Rumi. He became a devotee and disciple of Shah Latif and would always accompany him during his peregrinations and would deliver daily a discourse on Masnavi. Shah held him in high esteem and called him Calipho Muhammad Salah. He drafted "Bazghal Ja Kalma" in Sindhi which later on came to be known as "Muhammad Salah Ji Sindhi". He also composed "Safar Namu" of Shah Latif which was lost in the later period<sup>(1)</sup> Makhdum Abdullah Agro of Kandiaro where Shah Latif would stay during his frequent peregrinations enroute various parts of Sindh.<sup>(2)</sup>

Makhdum Muhammad Siddiq Qureshi was also alive in 1165 AH. He was a scholar and sufi saint of his time and was a teacher in a Maktab (religious seminary) at Kotri Kabir Taluka Kandiaro. This school was situated in the neighborhood of Makhdums in the centre of "Sawa Lakh Muqam". There was a mosque where Shah Latif used to stay. Nearby the mosque there was a Laee (Tamarisk tree) which was called "Shah's Lao" in memory of the great poet and was standing there till 1897 AD.<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> A tradition in regular circulation with the progeny narrated to this writer by late Maulvi Abdullah on seventeenth January 1959.

<sup>(2)</sup> A tradition from the progeny of Makhdum narrated by an old lady of the family and communicated to this writer by Mr. Ghulam Rabani Agro. From this tradition it is confirmed to certain extent that Makhdum Sahib was a learned teacher of Masnavi and after him Agro was a great enthusiast and scribe of Masnavi.

<sup>(3)</sup> This is a persistently recurrent tradition in circulation amongst the Makhdum scholars of Kotri Kabir. This was narrated to this writer for the first time by the head of this family late Ghulam Qadir in February 1967 AD. Later on in 1985 AD this writer witnessed certain paper through the courtesy of Mian Ghaus Muhammad Gohar, the present spiritual head of the family. These papers reveal that Makhdum Muhammad was alive in 1165 AH. This writer also visited the mosque and the place of Laee (Tamarisk tree) and on further enquiry it was



Fakir Muhammad Hafiz alias Mian Sahib Dino Farooqi (1192 AH) was the grandfather of Sachal. He was sitting in meditation outside Daraza town under the grove of Khabar trees (Salvadora) when Shah Latif happened to pass by this route. On Shah Latif's persuasion Mian Sahib broke his mediatory abstinence and dug a well and constructed a mosque. (Lutful Latif, p-83-84).

Makhdum Muhammad (d-1174 AH) was a son of Makhdum Abdul Rahman "Shaheed" (Martyr) and his successor. Once during his life time Shah Latif camped at the well of Chunih Fakir Ujjan outside of Khuhra town. When Makhdum Sahib came to know about this camp, he sent a messenger with invitation. It appears that Shah had met with Makhdum Abdul Rahman Shaheed who was killed on the orders of Mian Noor Muhammad Kalhoro in 1145 AH. Apparently because of the previous relationship he requested Shah Latif for stay at his residence. Shah preferred to camp overnight at Fakirs' well. Shah Latif sent a poetic reply written with charcoal on a piece of terracotta:

اچ نہ آیس آن، صبح ایندس سپرین  
توتی جھنجھو نان، سوکھی بار گھین جا<sup>(1)</sup>

learnt that whenever Shah Latif visited Makhdum Muhammad, he was attended by Abdul Rahim Phulpoto Kori Fakir. The descendants of this Fakir have preserved a plate (Thalhi) and it is presumed that Shah used this plate during his meals. This plate was shown to the writer by Mian Muhammad Ismail (Age 75 years).

<sup>(1)</sup> This tale is in continuous circulation amongst the Makhdum scholars of Khuhra and the elder scholar Makhdum Muhammad Aqil (fourth) has mentioned this in his manuscript book (Tarikh-e-Aeena Jahan Numa). This was narrated to this writer for the first time by the late scholar Ustad Makhdum Ameer Ahmed and this was also included in the margin of "Tufatul Kiram" Sindhi translation (published by Sindhi Adabi Board, 1957, p-p-228-240). Makhdum Sahib also stated that Shah wrote those lines himself with charcoal on a piece of terracotta. When I

The next morning Shah Latif went to Makhdum Sahib. He was accompanied by his Raag singers with tambourines. Makhdum Sahib being a strict practitioner of Shariah demurred about the presence of singers. Shah justified their presence and said that music had become a food for his soul. Makhdum Sahib conceded and allowed him to have Raag (musical session) without instruments. Shah Latif asked the musicians to put the tambourines away inside a room. After the Isha (night) prayers when the Fakirs began singing with melancholic pathos in rapturous symphony, lo and behold, the instruments inside the room started playing. Makhdum Sahib exclaimed that this was indeed a weird phenomenon and no account Shah was to be blamed for this. On this occasion Shah Latif stayed with Makhdum Sahib for a week or so and held intellectual discourses with him. Makhdum Muhammad himself belonged to Awaisi order and was an eminent Shaikh and an innate divine. This meetings took place in the last years of Shah's life around 1159-1160 AH when Makhdum Sahib was sixteen seventeen years old.

- Chunih Fakir Ujjan of Khuhra with whom Shah Latif stayed has been mentioned above.

- Syed Muhammad Baqa (martyred, 1192 AH) was father of Pir Sahib Muhammad Rashid "Roz-a- Dhani". Shah Latif held a meeting with him and both had had a frank discussion. Shah Latif had this meeting after he left Khuhra town.<sup>(1)</sup> This was mentioned by Syed

went to Khuhra town, he showed me a room which was near the outer door of Jamia mosque and where Shah Latif had stayed. Late Maulvi Din Muhammad Wafai has also narrated in Lautful Latif (p-p-81-82) the incident of Shah Latif's visit to Makhdum Muhammad based on a reference form "Tarikh-e-Aeena Jahan Numa".

<sup>(1)</sup> Mir Abdul Hussain Khan Sangi in "Lataif Latifi (p-79) has mentioned about this meeting and also Maulvi Din Muhammad Wafai has mentioned this in "Lutful Latif (p-84-85).



Muhammad Baqa to his talented son Muhammad Rashid (1170-1230 AH). It was due to this meeting that Muhammad Rashid focused his attention on the verses of Shah Latif. He was the first great scholar and a leading personage of Qadria order in Sindh who initially identified the mystic thought suffused in the verses of Shah Latif and mentioned some of these gems in his academic and moral lectures now part of his sayings (Malfuzat).

Pir Mosan Shah Jilani of Laoo Mubarak (Ghotki) was scholar, sage, seer and spiritual head (Sajjada Nashin). He constructed a grand mosque and established a religious school (Madrassa) in 1101 AH. When Shah Latif visited Laoo and stayed in this mosque he held an intimate discourse with the Pir Sahib. Shah Latif recited some verses from Sur Marui which are still preserved with the descendants of Pir Sahib. According to a tradition the first verse recited by Shah Latif which had a telling effect on Pir Sahib was this:

زمر زخرف سورا، حمد جني جو هنڌ  
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم اهو پنهنجو ايند  
(1) باري لاهج بند، ته ملان ماروئڙن کي.

Makhdum Muhammad Hashim (d-1172 AH) used to live at Bahrapur near Bulri where Shah Latif first met him. This intellectual contact and series of meetings between the two continued till 1153-1154 AH. During these years Shah decided to construct a tomb over the grave of Mioon Shah Karim. When Makhdum Sahib came to know about this he asked Shah Latif not to

(1) This writer got this tradition from reliable persons in Kotri. Similar tradition was received later on at Adilpur with a changed series of verses from Sur Marvi.

construct the tomb. Shah Latif rationalized this as an act of immense love and affection for Mioon Shah Karim and informed that a Jamia Masjid would also be constructed. Thereafter the meetings of between the two subsided but despite that Shah Latif held Makhdum Sahib in great esteem till the end.<sup>(1)</sup>

Dervish Datar Dino Bin Dervish Ishaq Sakario (the patriarch of the Mula Katiar saints who is mentioned by Qani in Tuhfatul Kiram). Shah Latif had frequent meetings with him and when he decided to visit Multan to purchase Kashi bricks for the tomb of Shah Karim and the nearby mosque, Dervish Datar Dino (who was a very close devotee of the saints of Multan) accompanied him, (this tradition is in constant circulation within the saints of Mula Katiar and it was narrated to this writer by the Sajjada Nashin late Fakir Muhammad Ishaq).

Makhdum Bahavan Shah was the Sajjada Nashin of Suharwardi Ghausia Dargah (mausoleum of Multan). He met with Shah Latif in the company of Fakir Datar Dino and held discourse. This meeting took place during the years 1154-1155 AH.

Mian Muhammad Sadiq Naqshbandi Thatvi was scholar and Sufi saint. He was a pupil of Makhdum Muhammad

(1) For further explanation of statement of Makhdum Muhammad Mueen see below. In Lataif Latifi (p-p-100-101) the narrative mentioned by Mir Abdul Hussain Sangi is not correct. It narrates that Makhdum Muhammad Hashim had come to Shah Latif at Bhit for terminating the Raag and that the tambourines had played on their own despite being put inside a room. The incident of the instruments playing on their own had occurred when Shah was a guest of Makhdum Muhammad at Khuhra. Regarding the tradition pertaining to prohibition of Makhdum Muhammad Hashim some statements denote Makhdum Sahib saying: "Mioon Shah Karim had himself constructing the tomb over the graves from the Shariah point of view". Mioon Shah Karim's prohibition has been mentioned in "Lataif Latifi".



Mueen and teacher of Khawaja Muhammad Zaman of Luari. He was an expert in Persian language and an accomplished poet was mentioned by Mir Ali Sher Qani as “جامع فنون کمال ظاهري و باطني” (an encyclopedia of art and excellence, apparent and esoteric). He became a disciple and devotee of Shah Latif in the beginning of this period of Shah’s life and remained so till the end. Later on the advice of Shah Latif he adduced beautiful chronological extractions in Persian language based on numerology on the demise of Shah Habib (1144 AH) and the construction of the mausoleum Mioon Shah Karim (1156 AH).

Khawaja Muhammad Zaman (first) of Luari was a student of Mian Muhammad Sadiq Naqshbandi Thatvi, a great scholar and disciple of Shah Abdul Latif. He settled at Luari in 1150 AH and probably Shah Latif met him on his way or return from Kutch and held a highly uplifting enlightened sufistic discourse with him. Khawaja Sahib had graduated from Thatta in the apparent and esoteric disciplines of knowledge and therefore, in the meeting Shah Latif enquired of him: “Is there any knowledge after extinction?” Instead of answering the query Khawaja himself posed the counter question: “What is there before extinction?” Khawaja Sahib was relatively young at the time of his meeting and desired that Shah Latif should become his disciple. However, Shah did not stay there longer and departed. According to Khawaja Muhammad Zaman “Shah Latif was a self-actualized seer whose heart was pulsating with divine rhythm. (The book “Marghbul Ahbab” written by Nazar Ali Talpur; Lutful Latif, p-p-75-76; Tazkara Mashahir-i-Sindh, volume-III, p-p-111-113). Mir (Syed) Muhammad Ata Ameer Khani (d-3<sup>rd</sup> Shaban 1178 AH). He discarded his sectarian biases and his

choleric temperamental habit and despite being a member of Shia family converted to an eclectic and broader outlook. Shah Latif grew fond of him and would stay with him sometimes at Thatta. In year 1152 AH he sojourned at Thatta and saw a mystic Dervish Habib Shah Kalhoro who was fast asleep undisturbed on one side for two consecutive days and nights. Shah Latif sat by his side and in a reverential tone uttered: “O’ man of God what you have achieved in slumber, we are seeking with our eyes wide open. Who has taught you this peace of mind?”<sup>(1)</sup>

Makhdum Muhammad Mueen Thatvi was a leading scholar of his time with whom Shah maintained an enduring discourse from his mature period of his life till the end. Makhdum Muhammad Mueen was a keen researcher and profound philosopher of his time and an inveterate adherent of Ibn-ul-Arabi mystical school of thought and an exceptional exponent of the doctrine of “Wahdat-ul-Wajood”. He was an indulgent pupil of Makhdum Inayatullah, an outstanding scholar of Thatta and of Shah Waliullah, the pre-eminent academic of Delhi. In Tasawuf he was a disciple of Mian Abul Qasim Naqshbandi Thatvi, a great Shaikh and teacher (Murshid) of Naqshbandi order. He was very close friend of Shah Abdul Latif and sometimes he would go to Shah and in turn Shah Sahib would also revert to him at Thatta for intellectual discourse. Shah Latif trusted immensely his knowledge of Fiqh and Islamic

<sup>(1)</sup> In Makalat-ul-Shura Mir Ali Sher Qani, p-p-221-222 and in Tuhfatul Kiram and “Mayar-e-Salkan-e-Tariqat, has mentioned this. He has also named that mystic as “قنبري” (Qalhra), for further information about Muhammad Ata see Lutful Latif, p-p-78-79 and Tazkara Mashahik-e-Sindh, volume-II, p-p-338-339.



jurisprudence and wrote him an epistle for seeking guidance about Awaisi order. Makhdum Sahib held Shah in great esteem and regarded seriously all the verbal and written expressions of Shah Latif.<sup>(1)</sup>

Makhdum Muhammad Mueen was very fond of Sana and was enamored of Shah's Raag. He breathed his last in ecstasy listening to Shah's 'Raag'. He reached the highest state of psychic sublimation and consciousness. Mir Ali Sher Qani in "Tufatul Kiram" and "Mayar-e-Salkan-e-Tariqat" has described this incident in the following words:

"Shah asked his Fakirs at Bhit: let us have the last meeting with our friend. He arrived in Thatta at Makhdum Muhammad Mueen's residence. A Raag soiree was held which was also attended by Makhdum Sahib. During the climax of this soiree, he went inside a room and breathed his last. Shah Abdul Latif after attending the funeral prayers and on the wayback to Bhit expressed: "I used to visit Thatta because of him, now after him it is finished", (Tuhfatul Kiram, volume-III, published at Delhi, p-229-230). "In his last days (Makhdum Mueen)

(1) There was a continual exchange of question answers on the religious issues between Makhdum Muhammad Mueen and Makhdum Muhammad Hashim (Tuhfatul Kiram, 3x229). Once Makhdum Muhammad Hashim decided to visit Makhdum Muhammad Mueen to discuss an important issue. When he arrived, Shah Latif was sitting with Makhdum Muhammad Mueen. As soon as Makhdum Muhammad Hashim entered the outer portal Shah asked Makhdum Muhammad Mueen: "Please do not refute Makhdum Sahib today because I see the blessings of Prophet Muhammad on his forehead". Makhdum Muhammad Mueen welcomed Makhdum Muhammad Hashim and expressed that there was no more difference with him on any issue and then he saw Makhdum Sahib off. (The famous tradition narrated to this writer by the saint Fakir Muhammad Ishaq of Mula Katiar).

became a great devotee and enthusiast of the patron of the Sufi saints Shah Abdul Latif. Shah Latif also grew fond of his company at Thatta and would visit him frequently. On the last day of Makhdum's life Shah came and convened a soiree. Makhdum Sahib reached ecstatic sublimation and breathed his last..... (When) his funeral procession was heading towards Makli Shah was also following it. On his return from the funeral he uttered these words from his miraculous tongue: "This was our last visit to Thatta to bid fare well to our friend....." (Mayar-e-Salkan-e-Tariqat, manuscript).



## CHAPTER FIVE

### The last period of confining oneself at Bhit (1161-1165 AH)

Makhdum Muhammad Mueen's demise occurred in the year 1161 AH which is verifiable from the historic extract "قطره در بحر واصل شد" given by Qani. The statement of Shah Latif after the demise of his friend depicts the state of grief and pathos Shah found himself in. He prophetically proclaimed that this was his last visit to Thatta and he would never visit Thatta again. At this time Shah was fifty nine years old and after his return to Bhit never undertook any other journey. He vowed to spend the rest of his life in divine meditation with Fakirs at Bhit. This is confirmed from this fact that he started constructing a new three tomb mosque at the place of old one. This mosque was completed under the supervision of Shah Latif by Idan, the mason in 1162 AH.<sup>(1)</sup> It is the same three tomb mosque which is extant till today. Qazi Ibrahim of

<sup>(1)</sup> According to Lataif Latifi, Shah laid the foundation of this mosque and then it was constructed in his presence and under his supervision:

"مسجد مملي دوروي والاخبار نمونه پسنديده تيار شد" (ص-۲۹) "عبدان معمار ساکن بکھر مسجد مظهر دوروي اولياء صاحب بریت شريف ساخته بود" (ص-۷۱) بنا کرده شاه والاخبار- که شد دوروي مملي تيار (ص-۲۶).

Shah Latif's mausoleum was also constructed five years later by Idan the mason.



old Hala has adduced the date of construction from the following Persian poetic line:<sup>(1)</sup>

”نادري مسجد درين چه زيبا دل رُيا“

Shah Latif now settled for good at Bhit and devoted himself whole heartedly to divine meditation and contemplation. The following statement of Mir Sangi delineates the last years of the life of Shah Latif: “He would invariably offer prayers five times a day with congregation in the Jamia mosque at Bhit. He did not lead the prayers and according to the Tariqa (order of Shah Abdul Karim) three rosaries of Zikr prescribed with Fajr prayers and other prayers were chanted. First rosary incantation was “Allah Hoo”, the second rosary incantation was “Allah Allah” and the third rosary incantation was “Hoo Hoo”. He would fast most of the days and would say: “Real fasting person is one who is not expecting the Eid and the real righteous person (Abid) is one who has overcome his ego (آء). The mosque has become the place of worship (سجده گاه) because it lacks self-

(1) After the demise of Shah Latif, Qazi Ibrahim adduced the date of death through poetry (see below). The brick bearing the date of completion of the mosque would have been laid somewhere in the mosque but it is not present now. It is presumed that during the construction of the Verandah (lounge) or due to other architectural changes the said brick was removed and never reaffixed. The poetic composition denoting the date of construction of the mosque by Qazi Ibrahim was obtained by this writer from the ancient manuscripts of a library at Walhar. This is as under:

”تاريخ عمارت مسجد غواص بحر حقيقت سيد شاه عبداللطيف جو عليه الرحمة قدس الله سره العزيز بطريق مصرع، نادري مسجد درين چه زيبا دل رايي“ 1151 =

According to this writing the numeral of the year is written as 1151 instead of 1161 which is not correct. Word Rubai is incorrect as it is not properly rhymed. According to numerical calculations:

نادري = ۳۱۵، مسجد = ۱۰۷ + درين = ۲۱۴ + ۸ = زيبا = ۲۰ + دل = ۳۴ + ريا = ۲۰۳ = ۱۱۶۲.

exposure and after effacing itself, directs the worshippers towards Kaaba”.<sup>(1)</sup>

Now Shah Latif chose Bhit as his final destination. Every Thursday night the Raag session would be held regularly and Bhit became the centre of his disciples, devotees and the common supplicants. The Raag was held irregularly before but after demise of Shah Habib in 1144 AH, the Fakirs devoted more attention towards the Raag. After that during sixteen years period, due to the whole hearted involvement, devotion and maturation of the singer Fakirs in rendering the verses and compositions of Shah Latif, the institution of Shah Jo Raag gradually evolved into a classical genre. Indeed the Raagai singer Fakirs had attained the coveted heights of musical excellence. Tamar Fakir was the leading maestro composer of Raag and Syed Taqi Fakir, Hashim Ali Fakir Rihanpoto and others would sing under his command. All the Raagai Fakirs had their own tambourines now and Shah Jo Raag was convened regularly in the presence of Shah Latif, leading to a wider and with profounder searing effect and pathos:

”لات جا لطيف جي، سڌا تنهنجو سڄي.“

The congregation on every Thursday night Bhit Shah grew exponentially by magnetic attraction of Shah Jo Raag with plaintive notes of Shah Latif's poetry. The combined charm of words with celestial rendition of the Raag by the Fakirs worked wonders.

Shah Latif's longing for the Divine Truth and his cognition (عرفان) of the Absolute Truth led him to the ultimate Reality i.e. Unity of the Creator. He now longed for assimilation with the Creator and looked upon this temporal life as purely futile and utterly worthless. Shah Latif expressed

(1) Lataif Latifi, p-97-102 and 127.



this verity and cognition of Truth in a Wai (lyric) in Sur Suhni:

"کھڑي منجه حساب، هئن منجه هوت ري"

According to a persistently sustained tradition as well as the contemporary scholarly interpretation and opinion, viewed in the perspective of this Wai, Sur Suhni was the last of the versifications of Shah Latif. <sup>(1)</sup>

The music was food for the soul of Shah Latif. He breathed his last, entranced and enraptured in the ravishing symphony of the soulful music. Unto the last days of his life the Raag continued for three consecutive days according to his wish. Shah remained in state of meditation. In his last hours he was completely engrossed in contemplation. It was during a brief interval the Fakirs noticed that Shah's soul had departed for the eternal abode. <sup>(2)</sup> Mioon Wali Muhammad son of late Mioon Noor Muhammad Bhatti, the teacher of Shah Latif washed the dead body. <sup>(3)</sup> He was buried at the place indicated in his will where his grave exists today. It was fourteenth of Islamic month of Safar 1165 AH.

Shah Latif's demise was a terrible shock for his devoted Fakirs. Some of them could not survive this and passed away in grief. Two of the eminent scholars of the time, Qazi Ibrahim Halai and Muhammad Panah 'Ruja' Naqshbandi Thatvi who were devoted to Shah Latif have composed the

<sup>(1)</sup> The preceding persistently sustained tradition has been relied on Mir Abdul Hussain Khan Sangi in Lataif Latifi (p-182). The contemporary standard scholarly expert opinion and mystic perspective is that of Allama I.I Qazi's. He was himself man of vision and thought, a well of literature undefiled and spiritual knowledge and great authority on the philosophy and wisdom of Shah Latif.

<sup>(2)</sup> Lataif Latifi-p-120.

<sup>(3)</sup> Ibid, p-171.

following historic quatrains which reflect this tragic heart-breaking incident:

In the following quatrain Qazi Ibrahim Halai has extracted from words "Rizwan-e-Haq" the year of demise:

شاه صاحب ذوالمناقب سيد عبداللطيف  
آن که قطب وقت خود بودست در مردان حق  
چون ز جام ارجمي مخمور نوش وصل شد  
گفت ملهر غيب ربي رحلتش "رضوان حق"  
1165=

In the following couplets Muhammad Panah Ruja has extracted the year of demise from his last line

زد نمره در فراق دگر کرد سينه چاک  
شد محو در مراقبه جسر لطيف پاک.  
1165=

گفت اين "رجا" مرید سن ارتحال پير  
گرید محو عشق وجود لطيف مير  
1165=

The preceding biographical delineation is a brief outline of Shah Latif's temporal and earthly life which is elucidated by certain reliable written references and credible traditions and corroborative historic indicators and remains of the past. <sup>(1)</sup> Besides these total manifestations, there are other ancient marks of antiquity which illuminate the biography of Shah Latif. Amongst these include his grave which is the repository of his mortal remains, the mausoleum of Mioon

<sup>(1)</sup> Certain indicators and marks require further enquiry and research. Presently this brief outline has been delineated as preface to the Risalo. Fourteenth of Safar 1165 AH, the date of demise coincides with 1-2, January 1752 AD



Shah Karim at Bulri and a Jamia mosque and the tomb of Shah Habib and the Jamia Masjid at Bhit. "Lal Lao", "Kando" and certain other habitations are also indicative of his various stages of life in the past. However, in reality Shah Jo Risalo and his Raag are the living chrocinclcs of his life story. The poetic compositions and versification in the Risalo eloquently affirm the unsurpassed poetic excellence and mystic insight of Shah Latif. At the same time it is a permanent and enduring document of Sindhi language. It is like a celestially inspired composition of universal philosophical dimension. It is the timeless spirit and very essence of Islamic thought and values. It is reflective of variegated shades of natural human attitudes, modes, sense and sensibilities, passions, desires and emotions, hopes and aspirations. It is also a mirror of higher human, ethical and prime moral values. Shah Jo Raag is an important historic institution, founded and completed by Shah Latif himself. It miraculously serves to transmit and communicate the Divine Truth and eternal verities, thoughts and reflections, in bewitchingly rendered songs of pathos and marvelously enlivens the living, regenerates the polluted hearts and revives the spiritually dead souls.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Thought process in Shah's verses

Thought in Shah's poetry contains multitudinous subjects and aspects of life which every essayist will narrate in his own style. There are divergent meanings and interpretations of life imbued in the poetry of Shah which every writer will assess and observe according to his vision. There are higher intellectual signs and symbols, representations and images about individual and collective human character, reflective of multifarious vicissitudes of life in the poetry of Shah Latif. This will be interpreted by every thinker according to his own insight, outlook and perspective. Shah's message is not meant for a particular period, time or clime. His higher intellectual vision and profound classical thought is not confined to a particular geographical entity, nation or tribe, country and is not limited to the cultural mores and traditions, rituals and rites of a particular society. Shah's message and mission are overarching, infinite, universal and is addressed to humankind in general. Shah's thought processes though cosmopolitan and universal is quintessentially Islamic in spirit. Shah Latif is amongst those self-actualized mystic poets who have delineated poetically and artistically the interplay of temporal, mundane, earthly human relations with Divine Truth in the light of Islamic Tasawuf and Tariqa. Some of these aspects are very imperative: the grandeur of the Creator, creation and expansion of universe, unity and diversity of creation, the



interrelation of the Creator with the creatures, Unity of Allah and the institution of the messenger of Allah (Risalat), the imperatives of good intentions and ideas, verity of faith, the importance of higher objectives and the achievements thereof through persistent efforts and endeavors in the journey of this world, the significance of nobler human character in overcoming predicaments, impediments, at the critical junctures of love intertwined with sensitive tender relationship. Every great sufi mystic and thinker has depicted these quaint essential truths through postulations, symbols, subtle signs, insinuations and allusions. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Shah Abdul Latif are very close to each other in their exalted sufistic consciousness and ways and means of expression, yet both have their distinct individual style and mode of communication. Maulana Rumi has narrated tales and anecdotes. He through logical and wise disputation has adduced superb moral lessons which are the very essence and soul of his sufistic thought. Shah Latif has presented those stories and tales which were well known and were quasi-historical or were in constant circulation since long. The people of Sindh thought these tales to be from the everyday real life. Maulana Rumi has narrated the tales from the beginning to the end whereas Shah has only given certain selective descriptive narrative dramatic details at random. Shah Latif has presented picturesque and pictorially captivating vivid details from the common folks' life in Sindh. These celebrate the exotic kaleidoscopic variety of rustic workers, professionals and their down-to-earth life-style e.g. the lives of peasants, herdsmen, potters, ironsmiths, weavers and butchers, minstrels and musicians, pastorals, gypsies and nomads. He has also described the peculiarities of habits, complexities and characteristics of a number of animals like camels, buffaloes, birds and butterflies and thus has demonstrated his innate sense of keen observation and nature

friendliness. In sufistic thought Maulana Rumi's style is rational and argumentative. But Shah's thought is perceptive and mystical: i.e. it is imbued with human psychological shades and variations and esoteric spiritual mysteries. Both Maulana Rumi and Shah Latif accord utmost importance to man's persistent search and endeavor for reaching the ultimate and exalted destination. Both urge determination, faith, self-confidence, fortitude and resolution on this path. At the final stage of relationship between the Creator and the creatures Shah Latif considers Abdeat (submission) as the climax of excellence.

نکا ابتدا عبد جي ننکا انتها.

Shah Latif is a natural expositor of human psychological variations and diversities. His higher consciousness is in tandem with human psychological undulations and alternations. The individual characteristic of Shah's higher vision and consciousness lies in his cognition of human sensibilities and passions in the vortex of sensitive human relationship like love and affection. This understanding comes through his inner perception and subjective emotional experiences. All the Surs of Shah Jo Risalo express through multitudinous Baits and Wais these internal matters of heart's core sensitivities and perceptiveness. The five Surs of Sasui delineate in minute details the internal conflict, collision, anxieties and agitations of a perturbed mind and an apprehensive heart. These Surs depict human hopes and aspirations, dejections and depressions, fears and frustrations with ever-recurring themes of encounters between optimistic determination and hopeless pessimistic suspicions. These are reflective of external oppression and internal resistance of a bleeding heart and its lonely cry in the wilderness. Shah pathetically portrays subjective reasoning of Sasui in her forlorn longingly arduous ramblings in search of Punhoon



with ceaseless queries of a lovelorn Sasui: Punhoon is here or there? May wait or proceed? Where to go in face of labyrinthine maze of misleading paths?

(وائون ونه ٿيون ڪهڙيءَ وات وڃان؟)

The poetry of Shah Latif in his Risalo represents Shah's higher poetic vision and sufistic insight. Indubitably it appears to be inspired by a Divine message and mission and represents his universal cosmopolitan thought. Its leitmotif and moving spirit is predicated on Islamic philosophy and ethical structure and mirrors a picture gallery of natural human attitudes, aspirations, sense and sensibilities, passions and compassions at divergent stages of life. Shah Latif preferred toilsome, strenuous endeavors to fathom asses and observe the strengths and weaknesses of human character and morals betwixt the trials and tribulations of life. His conscientious heart and conscious mind were convinced that the mystery of human life on earth could be resolved with man's unending struggle for the excellence till he attains the exalted place of cognition of the Absolute and gets closer to the Divine Truth (ذات حق) and is finally assimilated.

In the context of the excellence of human character, pursuit of the Truth and the Absolute and the ultimate reunion with the Maker, Shah's thought and philosophy aspire for an infinite and limitless future.

جي قيام مٿان، ته ڪر اوڏا سيرين.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

**Epilogue: The Risalo is divided into Surs (chapters) and Subdivided into Dastans (sub-chapters). Here is the thematic exegesis of the Surs of the Risalo with concise explanatory notes:**

### SUR KALYAN

This Sur has a deep philosophical significance with respect to Shah Latif's thought process as it leads to the path of Tauhid and Risalat. It interprets the meaning of unity of faith and the universe. It advises the seekers of higher consciousness and cognition to avoid hypocrisy, ego and false sense of superiority and pride. To look into their inner-selves and submit to the path of self-annihilation, the Sur reinforces zeal for self-sacrifice, accelerates determination to reach higher destination and inspires courage and steadfastness. It preaches constant struggle and restless toil and considers it as the crown of the true seekers of Divine love. The Sur celebrates glory to the Almighty, Unity and ubiquity of Allah. The poet sings of unity and multiplicity of the creation, praises Prophet Muhammad and his ultimate intercession for the faithful. Death is a life to lovers and means of reunion with the beloved (Allah). Poisonous wine tests the mettle of the lovers and it is welcomed by them. The loved one is the best physician for the malaise of love. Allah's majesty is supreme. He alone kills and restores the life.



### **SUR YAMAN KALYAN**

This Sur is in continuity of the preceding Sur in the thematic content. The basic theme or premise of the Sur is pain of love which is due to separation of soul from the body because this is the perpetual condition of human pain. In order to recover from this and to reach a higher destination it is imperative to be conscious of the condition of pain and pangs of separation of soul. It celebrates the fire of love which consumes the true lovers like moths. The similes and metaphors of tavern and intoxicated wine imbibers symbolize the eternal suffering of the lover at the hands of the beloved, the pleasure of pain inflicted by the beloved and kindness and indulgence are shown as a reward of thirsty lover who is ready to offer his head at any cost. The Sur alludes to the pain of love and the true physician for it, talks of the fire of love and the arrow of infatuation. Refers to jealousy of love, the poisonous wine of love that makes death desirable. Sufi-Talibs or seekers of Truth learn the lessons of Allah. The difference between the true learning and ordinary one is explicated. Mullahs or pedagogues are reprimanded for misleading people by literal superficial interpretations. The poet sings of the bow and arrow of love and love is compared to snake. He also talks of true state of lover and their relations to the object of their love. Pain of love and the true physician for it are described. Patience is necessary for love with forgiveness and humility. Moths burning themselves in the flame are compared to lovers dying in love.

### **SUR KHAMBHAT**

The Sur presents creative excellence of Shah's poetry as it celebrates the higher values of human love as well as the factual pulsating institution of love prevailing in the real life Sindhian society. The beloved is benign and compassionate and not callous and sadistic as generally believed. This

kindness and condescending demeanor is manifest form their smiling faces and indulgent eyes. The beauties and pleasures of moonlight nights are not comparable with the beauty of the beloved yet they show the direction of the beloved's home. The moon is a messenger of the beloved. The camel is the central character in the last three Dastans of this Sur. Literally it has two aspects, the camel takes the lover to the beloved's destination and it also symbolizes ones own struggling existence in this mundane earthly life traversing the arduous path of trials and tribulations in search of the Ultimate excellence.

### **SUR BARWO**

This Sur is the mirror of passionate feelings and sensations of a true lover. It is a conscious and unconscious expression of lover's longing and yearning for the beloved. It is a moaning cry of an anguished heart in separation with the beloved. Though the beloved is not present yet he is everywhere. The lover remembers him in absentia by giving vent to his pent-up emotions of unrequited love. The lover sends crow as a messenger of love and reminds the beloved of his afflictions and hardships due to separation. This Sur epitomizes the wiles, charms and seductions of the beloved and her ravishing beauty. The lover should take care in the path of love and should be steadfast and sincerely committed in love for ones beloved and avoid befriending many. The beloved is strangely whimsical and sometimes welcomes and the sometimes closes the door on the lover. When the beloved returns to the lover all his sorrows and grieves come to an end.

### **SUR SRI RAAG**

This Sur is an allegorical, metaphorical Sur depicting the arduous journey of human existence in this life, its trials and



tribulations and efforts and endeavors and the imperatives of pious intentions and good actions to achieve success in this odyssey. Man is compared to a pilgrim starting on a voyage through this world with some merchandise. The life is compared to an ocean and the seekers are sailing on a boat who may dip in the ocean. In the oceans there are persistent dangers of rocking of the boat on waves. The boat of life can safely sail through the threatening ocean with faith and truth, reinforced by indefatigable endeavors and determination. This troubled ocean of life can only be crossed with Allah's mercy and indulgence. The real testers of truth are those connoisseurs, seekers of truth (jewelers) who discriminate and differentiate true jewels from the counterfeit. These jewelers are the real salt of the earth.

### **SUR SAMUNDI**

From the subject point of view Sur Samundi has two aspects: historical and social. From the historical perspective it is reminiscent of the ancient Sindhi sea faring boat people, mariners, and professional merchants who would undertake long and grueling overseas voyages. From the social view point the Sur longingly depicts an environmental milieu of nagging anxiety and exasperating wait by the loved ones due to separation of their bread earners in the wake of their over seas voyages.

### **SUR GHATU**

The subject of this Sur is serious from the perspective of appearance and inner significance. It celebrates the lives of Ghatu, the valiant and daring fishermen who brave the perilous oceans while fishing and overcome insurmountable hazards. They kill mammoth sharks in their adventurous forays in the high seas. One of the most dangerous well-known whirlpools of Kalachi devoured the dauntless and

intrepid fishermen. The Sur compares the old experienced Ghatu with the latter-day inexperienced Ghatu who are quite ignorant of the devices of killing big fishes. The old ones undertook strenuous efforts to hunt the sharks and were ultimately successful. Mororo fishermen's adventurous killing of the sea monster (giant alligator) that would not let any fisherman come near, but devoured anything that approached it, is the leitmotif of this Sur.

### **SUR KHAHORI**

This Sur celebrates the Khahoris- the hardworking and rugged, austere characters who gather Duth (wild edible plants, pods or fruits) with dogged determination and fortitude in the jungles and mountains. Metaphorically speaking the Khahoris are the real diligently industrious persons of great persevering determination who face untold difficulties and impediments, yet they ultimately survive in the struggle of life and overcome the hurdles and finally prevail. In the relation between the Creator and the man, the genuine Khahoris are those seekers of truth who irrespective of apparent trappings of ephemeral attractions and seductions of this world persist in self-purification and self-abnegation and reach the irrevocable Truth.

### **SUR KAPAITI**

The women spinning cotton at their wheel are the main subject of this Sur. Though this profession is no more existent but the dignity of labor and high moral altitude involved in the work ethics remains intact. If the weaver woman is expert in her profession, she should not conceitedly flaunt her talent and show humility and self-effacement. Cotton spinning be carried on with concentration and without wasting time and with labor of love and superfine weaving is to be ensured to please the connoisseur and fetch good returns. Those who



love their profession are always contented because they are pleasing their Lord with their devotion and sense of duty. But those weaver women who lag behind need not despair as Lord looks after them also.

### SUR BILAWAL

This Sur delineates the Samo period social mores of professional minstrels, mendicants and musicians singing paeans for reward at the doors of the feudal lords at the break of dawn. From the perspective of interpretation, the Sur highlights the golden period of chivalry, charity and bravery of the noble characters. In this Sur Shah eulogizes Holy Prophet Muhammad, alludes to patrons and protégés and to the charity, magnanimity of Jadam Jakhro, a leading feudal lord. There is also an important historical reference to Sultan Allauddin coming from Delhi to Sindh with a large army and giving protection to a horde of people who paid tribute to him; and also to Rahu, Abro and Samo, the chiefs of the Samo tribe. Besides, Shah Latif paints a lively picture of Wagand, a Fakir of his who was a great wit. The allegorical allusions to Jadam Jakhro are factually a subtle reference to Prophet Muhammad whose advent in this world heralded enlightenment and salvation for the oppressed humanity. He came as a mercy unto the mankind and proved to be a majestic shelter for the poor and destitute.

### SUR PIRBHATI

Like Sur Bilawal this Sur also celebrates the charity and philanthropy of the magnanimous feudal chiefs who patronize the traditional hereditary minstrels, mendicants and musicians who would sing paeans at their doors. The subject of this Sur is Subbar Jam, the sovereign of Lasbela and his magnanimity. The other feudal lords would show their stature and grandeur but Subbar Jam would indulge in

charities to encourage the talented artists and help the poor and destitute. Spiritually Sakhi Subbar Jam is taken to represent a spiritual guide or Murshid or a Supreme Being. At the conclusion of the Sur the poet admonishes minstrel to play such a song which would be appreciated by Sakhi Subbar and ~~do~~ not be proud of his talents and beg reward from the noble Lord who has got elegant horses for him.

### SUR KARAYAL

This Sur describes the noble ways of water birds and metaphorically alludes to the objects and objections of sufis. The traditional characteristic noble nature of swan, geese and cranes and black kobra are described allegorically. According to the traditions of Sindh cranes are deemed to be neat and clean birds that do not land on turbid water and would not partake of rotten fish from the mud. Cranes go into the deep water to pick pearls from the shell. On the other hand the black kobra is blue blooded specie and its character is decent and noble. Though it possesses powerful venom in its teeth it does not harm or bite a person without any cause.

### SUR DAHAR

Since the ancient times the praise of sufis possessed of Divine love and deep spiritual introspection was invariably sung in the mystic soirees in "Sur Dahar". The panegyric compositions commending the Almighty's benevolence, kindness and prayers for the indulgence and favors are the theme of Sur Dahar. This Sur is replete with references to teaching some ethical and theistic lessons. It speaks of Lakho Phulani, a well-known brave and charitable, liberal minded man, and Likhi, his celebrated mare; of Sangharo the keepers of buffaloes; of Rebari, a tribe of rude, simple rustic people living in Larr; of Loran the marauders and robbers of the time; of Badamani Punro, the companion of Rano Soomro



and a well-known hero of Cutch, the hilly country; of man being a traveler in this world.

#### SUR ABRI

This Sur despite being one of the five Surs of Sasui with the similar background and same theme, Shah Latif has blazed new paths of higher consciousness through poetry in each Dastan, Bait and Wai. Sasui is in search of Punhoon in thirst of love. A lover, who is pursuing the beloved, should not fear hills and valleys or other troubles of the way. The awful scenery of mountains is painted by the poet. Sasui mistakes the way to Punhoon, whom she carries with her as Punhoon is within her soul. It is not every one who undergoes such troubles; only lovers can do so. Sasui's feet are wounded by walking over rough stones. Still she does not like to return. Sasui and Punhoon are same. She reaches Kech Makran, which is in fact within her. She entreats the mountains not to be cruel to her. Sleep causes the separation and puts her in trouble. Humility is recommended to Sasui. She calls Punhoon to help her in troubles. She has death in sight. Pangs of separation torment her and again she is calling Punhoon to help her. Patience and resignations are recommended by the poet as remedy. Shah advises Sasui as seeker of Truth-Salik to die before her death so that she may reunite with her beloved. Sasui followed Shah Latif's advice and accost her death, reprimands life and embraces death with open arms.

#### SUR MAZAU

Sasui's pursuit of beloved Punhoon, with her stressful exertion on the way, untold sufferings and afflictions in face of over whelming odds, challenging death with her inner monologue depicting her psychological and psychic condition of higher consciousness is the main theme of this Sur. The

dogs of Kech bark at Sasui, the mention of dogs bring on other thoughts of their natural ways. Sasui is in the sea of troubles cries but still goes on as these are conditions necessary for meeting the beloved. Her soliloquy to mountains reiterates the resolve that death is the best and the shortest way for her to meet Punhoon. She is encouraged to be moving towards her lover in every way possible. She curses the camels that quietly bore away Punhoon. She cries in separation.

#### SUR DESI

The arrival of brothers of Punhoon and their camels, taking away of Punhoon and Sasui's plunge into sorrows of separation and anguish of dejection is the main theme of this Sur. Hills, camels and her brothers-in-law are the three enemies of whom Sasui complains. However, she finds some more enemies and blames herself. Her own fault is that she was not careful about them. Sasui is entreated by her friends not to venture out after Punhoon but she does not hear them and comes out. Shah Latif describes Sasui's pleasure at the arrival of the caravan from Kech. The brothers of Punhoon carry away Punhoon without her knowledge. She wakes and blames herself for being fast asleep. She expects the camel men back but being disappointed goes out and runs to hills. Sasui encounters difficulties in the mountains and steep cliffs. The camel men conspire to take away Punhoon secretly. The Sur ends with the arrival of Punhoon at Kech Makran.

#### SUR KAHORI *KoHIYARI*

The heedless sleep of Sasui is blamed for the disastrous predicament. She soliloquizes with the hills while pursuing barefooted her beloved Punhoon. She deprecates sleep for its bad result. She rebukes mountains for excesses and scolds them for not showing her the trail of her beloved Punhoon.



Sasui complains that instead of consoling her grief the mountains are creating hurdles between her and Punhoon. Sasui reflects on the beauty of Punhoon and expresses her pangs of separation and sorrow and tells that torments and torture are her food during this period of affliction. She realizes that she even does not know how to express her anguish and agony because perhaps she is unaware of the way to ventilate her troubles. She woefully regrets that she is lonely and unguided and the destination is quite far off.

### SUR HUSSAINI

The poet advises Sasui to follow the path of commitment and devotion, irrespective of association and relationship and accelerate her pace so that she may reach Punhoon with determination before the sun sets in the west. Of course, the sunset adds to Sasui's troubles. She opens her heart to her mother and speaks to her sisters and friends of her determination to leave Bhambhor and go after Punhoon. Her companions have already gone and she is left behind. Sasui throws her ornaments away and goes after Punhoon. She suffers from severe pangs of love and distressful separation. She is tired of walking and wishes to find her lover. Sasui complains of separation and sheds hot tears for Punhoon. She calls after Punhoon and is anxious to go to Kech. She believes that happiness without misery is good for nothing. Punhoon is seen in a different light from others. Sasui bewails the loss of her lover.

### SUR RANO

Sur Rano has an acclaimed and legendary folk-lore background, being a well known story of Mumal and Rano's celebrated romance. Shah Latif has focused on certain aspects of the legend and turned it into a marvelous poetic rendition with superb flight of fancy and imaginative majesty of

incomparable excellence hitherto unknown in Sindhi literature. The Jogi presented in this Sur is an idealization and representation of a Salik - the seeker of truth through path of Saluk i.e. Tasawuf (mysticism). In the commonly related story, the way farer who accosts Rano and his companions has been shown to be a man of higher social status, a rich merchant or a chief of a province with substantial military might. In contrast to common legend, Shah Latif calls him an Adesi (a Sanyasi-ascetic Fakir) and a lover. He also designates him as a Unitarian Jogi and the head of the Saliks (Sufis). After the eleventh century AD "Hatt Yogis" had started a Unitarian monotheistic movement and when they came to Sindh the Sindhi mystics recognized their worth and used their nomenclature as a metaphor. Their analogy was often borrowed by Shah Latif to mean a person of great ascetic wisdom and sufistic insight. The Sur describes Mumal's longing for Rao and she keeps the lamps burning till the day break. Beauty of Mumal painted with an artistic brush of unique sophistication. She prefers Rano to other lovers. A Sami Fakir returns from Mumal's Kak Mahal and gives some information of his experiences. Several great men go to win her but they never return and all are killed. Rano wins her love but he is separated due to machinations of King Hamir Soomro. She entreats Rano to be reconciled to her as he is offended. She cannot bear the pangs of love and separation. Mumal longs for meeting with Rano and remembers him. Effects of Rano's love on Mumal are described by the poet with Rano's obligations on Mumal. In this story Mumal's magical tricks and Rano's skills, their mutual passion, anger and repentance, separation of lovers are the topics touched by Shah Latif. Spiritually speaking Mumal is the lover, or a seeker of Allah; Rano is the beloved (Supreme Being); Kak is this world and its many associations: Dhat or Thar is the next world, the heavens.



### SUR LEELAN 2 Chanesar (Dasro)

Chanesar and Leelan are husband and wife and Chanesar loves and trusts her absolutely. Leelan's relations with her husband are also that of honesty and truth. She commits a blunder out of conceit. She surrenders her husband to Kounru for a necklace. Chanesar abandons Leelan in rage. Leelan now expresses repentance and beseeches Rano to forgive her sins of omission. Shah Latif has described in this Sur the relationship of mutual trust and love between husband and wife. Husband's role of a condescending and forbearing person and wife's role to be worthy of trust and faith have been highlighted. From the sufistic point of view the erring Leelan and forgiving Chanesar symbolize the blundering man and all-forgiving Maker. It is incumbent upon the Salik to keep his intentions and actions clean and pure as the Master knows the hearts and minds of man. It is imperative for the blundering man to beseech the mercy of the benevolent Master so that his sins of omissions and commission are pardoned. He should never lose faith and hope in the infinite benignity and mercy of the Lord and keep on entreating.

### SUR KAMOD (Leelan<sup>2</sup> Chanesar Dasro) Nuri Jam Tamachi

In this Sur Shah Latif has emphasized various aspects of the celebrated human noble character with reference to the folk-tale of Nuri Jam Tamachi. Nuri and Jam Tamachi have relationship of husband and wife. This relationship is relatively characteristic and its nature is different from that of Mumal Rano and Leelan Chanesar. Both Mumal and Leelan belong to royal families. Mumal captivated Rano with her magical multicolored palace of Kak and Leelan married her cousin Chanesar. In their comparison Nuri was an orphan girl raised in a poor fisherman's household. She was very cultured and she won over the Samo King with her humility

and charms. On the other hand the great king ignoring the Samo queens selected Nuri as his cardinal queen due to her noble demeanor. The Samo king Jam Tamachi fell head over ears in love with Nuri not because of her beauty, simplicity and humility but due to her wit and wisdom. From the poetic point of view this Sur reflects a panorama of plebian life of the poor fisherman of Keenjhar Lake and the depiction of fish hunting scene in a boat by Nuri with Jam Tamachi is indeed very splendid. From the perspective of delineation of noble human characters Nuri and Jam Tamachi are two outstanding and exemplary creative prodigies of Shah Latif.

### SUR SORATH

The Sur has in background the folk-tale of Sorath and King Rai Diach. With reference to certain aspects of the story Shah Latif has illuminated important angles of human characters with sufistic interpretation buttressed appropriate similes and metaphors. Shah Latif has presented the noble character of Rai Diach with his generosity and magnanimity along with his in-depth knowledge of music and its genuine worth. He has also commended the character of the bard Bijhal who went to Rai Diach's palace and played hundreds of sweet tunes to the enchantment of the king. He was offered gold, silver, jewels and animals but the obstinate bard would not accept them; he wanted the head of Rai Diach in the name God. When all the entreaties of the king, the queen and other inmates failed with him, Rai Diach, the generous Rai Diach cut off his head with his own hands for Bijhal who took it away with him exultingly. In this story Shah Abdul Latif has referred to the magical effect of the music, generosity of Rai Diach and faithfulness of queen Sorath while explicating and interpreting the sufistic precepts. Spiritually he takes Rai Diach to represent the true love of God, music as sweet hymns in praise of God and Sorath is



faithfulness and honesty personified and the beheading as reunion with God. Shah Latif has also used the allegory of appeasing the Raja and calling the bard upstairs in the palace and rewarding him with abundant prizes to mean the Holy Prophet's celestial journey to the seventh heaven or the Mairaj (Ascension). This epitomizes Shah Latif's great devotion to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his ingenious flight of imagination.

### SUR RIPP

Ripp means hard, heavy, powerful or extremely hardened crust of earth. This Sur is literally heavy and is perched on hardened solid earth because it treats of pains of love and crying. It celebrates pangs of love and their effects with shedding of tears. Love is compared to kiln. The pangs of separation lead to cries of pain and outburst of pent-up emotions. Melancholic wailings are to be kept secret from others and not shared with strangers but the sorrows and sufferings are to be expressed before the beloved and kiln of one's soul is to be covered so that steam of passions is not publically ventilated. The relationship between husband and wife is essentially one of love and affection and the wife has to be sincere and affectionate and the husband's love is based invariably on absolute trust and faith in the spouse.

### SUR PURAB

This is the Sur of Saluk which means it leads the seekers of Truth to their ultimate destination. Invoking the metaphor of Unitarian Hindu mendicant Yogis, they have been described in vivid details as Purbis, Kapris, Samis, Saniasis, Jogis, and Adesis. Their ultimate destination is Nath, for meeting whom they are going towards the Purab (East). Their other destinations are "Nani and Hinglaj" and for reaching there, they traverse long and arduous odyssey. Allegorically

the Purab is the last destination or Darul-Baqa where the Salik - Truth seeker would ultimately eternally reside after departing from this ephemeral world of great sorrows, sufferings, trials and tribulations. This Sur speaks of correspondence and communication between lovers, messages received from and sent to the beloved with the crow. The Sur also describes what a Sami should be and what he should do. A true Yogi is above all rituals and rites of passage. He washes his heart with his woes and cries in the heart instead of relying on the cotton threads and rosaries.

### SUR RAMKALI

This Sur like the preceding Sur is that of Saluk i.e. it leads the Saliks to the way which ultimately meander its course to the final destination. The Unitarian Hindu ascetics have been described as Jogis, Sanyasis, Samis, Adesis and Kapris. Cumulatively the subject and ambience of both the Surs is the same. However, from the perspective of meaning Sur Ramkali has a wider and deeper signification as much as it contains more comprehensive characterization of genuine Fakirs along with admonitions to the half-baked Jogis. The latter have been instructed how to become full-fledged thoroughbred Sanyasis. In Sur Purab, Purab is the terminal destination and in Sur Ramkali also Purab is the final terminus of the Jogis. In this world there are two kinds of Jogis: Nuri (enlightened or illuminated one) and Nari (fiery). The Nuri blaze the path of darkness and provide sweetness and light to the mankind, whereas the Nari obfuscate and mislead the common folks. Shah Latif lauds the true Jogis who burn their egos to provide light of guidance to others and he connects himself with those righteous souls and expresses poignantly that he would not live without them.

(آئون نہ جیغندی آن ری)



### **SUR ASA**

Sur Asa is a profoundly meaningful Sur as it carries great sufistic signification literally and metaphorically. Instead of presenting a conventional background and environment from the folktales this Sur is a repository of figurative esoteric allusions, sufistic innuendos and subtle implications. It describes the trials and tribulations of a True Salik - the seeker of Truth for reunion with Prophet Muhammad (Mahbub-i-Elahi) and enumerates various conditions and signposts on the way. For instance the poet speaks of the "place of wonder", with concomitant states of helplessness and enfeeblement of perception and cognition (ادراك) and morale (حوصلو). Abdications (ترك), pursuit (طلب), search (تحقيق) and Absolute (فناء) are the key concepts of Tasawuf enunciated by the poet in this Sur to illustrate finer points of mystical thought. In Tasawuf the Absolute (فناء) is the name of the Almighty which is a compound of all the sacred names and nomenclatures of Allah. The states of surrender and submission (تسليم) are spelled out as important watersheds on the path of a Salik. This Sur, like Sur Kalyan and Yaman speaks of the pure philosophy of sufis and unity of Allah and is the noblest and most solemn of all Shah Latif's compositions. It deals with concept of unity, specifying that unity is preferable to duality or multiplicity in reference to Allah. Egotism is deprecated and humility is elevated as a supreme virtue for the Salik. Eyes (mental) see nothing but Allah some peculiarities about them are exotically described. Mention is also made of the beautiful eyes of the beloved and their effect upon lovers. Difference between temporal (مجان) and spiritual (حقيقي) love is highlighted. Reference to real existence and non-existence, passions and other obstacles compared to donkeys. Omnipresence of Allah, secrecy of love, sight of the beloved

and how to be able to see Allah while being lost in Allah are the sub-themes of this Sur.

### **SUR MARUI**

The background of Sur Marui is the folk-tale of Umar Marui. The celebrated story of love for one's homeland is told in the tale of a virtuous village damsel and of the patience and justice of a king who is both just and unjust. In this story the rugged and rough life of freedom-loving, carefree rustics is shown to be far superior to that of the luxuries and delicacies of the palatial oligarchic formalized milieu. This is a saga of self respect and nobility of character of the poor village folks of Sindh and represents the higher social values of the Indus valley and this explains the popularity of this epic of patriotism through the ages. The love for one's motherland is the central theme of this Sur and Marui's character is the personification rather incarnation of patriotism. However, the real love is not with country or its people or one's relatives, but it is due to higher ethical values and moral virtues, decency and simplicity of the pristine people. Shah Latif takes Marui as the true lover of God. He eulogizes Marui's faithfulness to her husband and her love for home and simplicity of country life. Umer is a symbol of tyranny of this world and passions. Umer Kot represents this world which is at best a prison house, while Malir denotes the next world. Country scenery stands for beauties and blessings of heavens and ornaments represent vanities of this world.

### **SUR SUHNI**

The legend of Suhni Mehar constitutes the background of this Sur. The temporal (مجازي) love is the predominant motif running through this Sur. However, here the position of lover and beloved is at variance with the conventional wisdom. Suhni is the lover and Mehar is the beloved. Suhni's



love for Mehar is quite unheard of and curious. This legend is the saga of unconventional and unfamiliar amour. According to Shah Latif Suhni's beloved (ساعت) was there before the beginning of the time (انل).

ساعت جا سينگار انل کان اڳي هئا.

Shah believes that from mystical view point and interpretation Suhni's love is at the exalted pedestal of Ahdiat (احديت). According to the order (طريقه) of some Saliks the meaning of allegory enveloping this tale can be taken to mean as Haqiqat-e-Muhammadi (حقيقت محمدي). The poet describes Suhni's love and her resignation to God. She is always steadfast and true to promise even at the peril of meeting the beloved through death. Shah Latif delineates fearful state of the river and harrowing breaking of waves. There is over whelming abundance of love in Suhni for Mehar. She hears the noise of the bells of Mehar's buffaloes. Suhni is drowned when the intermediary props fail and like a true Salik, she is reunited with the Master.

گهوڙو ڀڳي مُنڌ مٺي وسيل وٽ  
تنهان پوءِ سٺا سنهڙي سڌ ميهار جا

The spiritual love of Suhni and Mehar existed before the world was created. Mehar cries for the rescue of Suhni. But the destiny will have its way. The poet depicts excess of desire of the lover (soul) for going over to beloved (Allah).

### SUR SARANG

Literally Sarang means the rainy season or monsoon. Sur Sarang conjures up the ambience of the monsoon rains. The seasonal showers quench the thirst of the parched people and that of the earth. The village folks exult as their cattle thrive. The migrant peasants return home and get reunited with their loved ones. The rain is divine mercy for the people and from this perspective the poet prays for copious rain in Sindh and for the prosperity and well being of the world. Shah Latif has

painted a pulsating picture of multicolored pageant on a kaleidoscopic canvas reflecting the interplay of mushrooming clouds with the lightning, the beauty and charms of village damsels. The poet sketches a captivating scenario chiseling in graphic details the rainy season and its associations. He shows that all are anxious for rain while the clouds are gathering followed by a much awaited thunder, lightning and showers of rain. Pleasant sceneries attending the rainfall are described with happy state of buffaloes. The rainy season is followed by cold weather and the good results of rain accrue. The signs of plenty and prosperity are galore.



## Glossary of Arabic, Persian, and Sindhi Words

1. Bait	=	Couplet, Verse
2. Baiaz	=	Diary, Journal
3. Bhit	=	Sand dune
4. Calipho	=	A deputy, assistant
5. Chilla	=	Meditation for a specified period
6. Dervish	=	Spiritual enlightened ascetic
7. Fakir	=	Devotee of Shah Latif
8. Haveli	=	Mansion Residence
9. Hujro	=	A private room, a residence
10. Jogi	=	A yogi or ascetic wanderer
11. Kafi	=	A form of poetic composition
12. Kalam	=	Poetic composition
13. Kando	=	Thorn tree, thistles.
14. Kapri	=	A Hindu yogi of ascetic order
15. Kharr	=	Ditch or depression
16. Kirar	=	Shrubs
17. Laee	=	A kind of Shrub
18. Larr	=	Lower Region of Sindh
19. Madressa	=	Religious seminary
20. Otak	=	Sitting room, Parlor
21. Raag	=	Classical vocal rendition of Shah's poetic compositions
22. Raagi	=	A classical singer of Shah's poetry



23. Raees = Chief, Head
24. Sabz Posh = Green dressed
25. Sama = Soiree, devotional music and song
26. Sami = A Hindu mendicant ascetic
27. Sanyasi = A wanderer Hindu ascetic mendicant
28. Silsalas = Sufistic order
29. Shariah = Strict compliance of Islamic laws
30. Taluka = Administrative division of district
31. Tariqa = Sufi order, a way to meet the Maker.
32. Tariqat = A sufistic path to reunite with the Maker
33. Ummi = Illiterate
34. Wai = Lyrical verse
35. Wadero = Chief, alderman, notable
36. Zikr = Chanting of sacred names



# *Life & Thought of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai*

BASED ON COMMENTARY OF SHAH-JO-RISALO  
POETIC COMPENDIUM OF SHAH ABDUL LATIF



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